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THE

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BEING

TWELVE SERMONS

ADAPTED TO THE

MECHANICAL AND AGRICULTURAL POPULATION.

BY

EDWARD WILLIAM CLARKE,

RECTOR OF GREAT YELDHAM, ESSEX.

LONDON:

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MDCCCXXXV.

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PREFACE.

"WHEN Philosophy saw the Muses standing by Boethius in his affliction, she spoke in terms of some surprise and indignation.* In our time this indignation would have been retorted by the sisters of the song. Philosophy has appeared, not to console, but to deject. When I have read and thought deeply on the accumulated horrors, and all the gradations of wickedness and misery, through which the modern systematic philosophy of Europe has conducted her illuminated votaries, to the confines of political death and mental darkness, my mind for a space feels a convulsion, and suffers the nature of an insurrection. I look around me. I look to human actions, and to human principles. I consider again and again what is the nature and effect of learning and instruction: what is the doctrine of evidence, and the foundation

* Boethius de Consol. Phil. l. i. pr. 1.

of truth. I ask myself, are all these changed? Have the moral and natural laws of God to his creatures another basis? Has the lapse of fifty years made an alteration in HIM who is declared to be THE SAME to-day, yesterday, and for ever? Can the violence, the presumption, the audacity, the arrogance, the tyranny of man, drunk with self-idolatry and temporary success, change the nature and essence of God and of his works, by calling good evil, and evil good? I am told, that human reason is nearly advanced to full perfection; I am assured that she is arrived at the haven where she would be. I again look around me. I ask, where is that haven? where is that steady gale which has conducted her? I listen, but it is to the tempest: I cast my view abroad, but the ocean is every where perturbed. I pause again. Perhaps it is 'the wind and storm fulfilling HIS word!'

"I resume the reflections of suffering humanity amid the wreck of intellect. This was not the ancient character of philosophy. The lovers of wisdom, in the best ages of Athens and of Rome, always discoursed with reverence and submission to the Author and Governor of the world. They considered of whom they spoke. If they turned to the origin of evil, or to any dark and unfathomable question, they

first called upon man to consider the limits of his understanding. They warned him, with most peculiar emphasis, to beware of those *αλυτοι απορια*ι, those difficulties of hard solution, which are but increased by defences or arguments ill constructed. They implored him affectionately to avoid all that tends to overthrow, to trouble, or disturb those principles which conduct to peace and to right action. Their advice was to strengthen the intellect, and to compose the passions, not by braving and insulting the all-powerful, all-wise, and all-merciful Creator, but by an humble, patient inquiry into his works, and by submission to his dispensations. They seemed to be well aware that, to him who understood all the bearings and relations of the word, *resignation* to the will of God was the whole of piety."*—*Pursuits of Literature,* Introd. p. xiv. See also p. 373.

" Every man who makes use of his reason, may easily apprehend, that the *general truths*† of religion are the most important; that they are those of which one ought chiefly to be persuaded; and that without these general truths, the particular ones would be useless, nay, would not be so much as truths.

* See Micah vi. 8.

† " Those upon which the whole of religion is founded."

"To inquire whether there be any sacraments, or how a man can be justified, one must believe, first, that there is a God and a religion: for if I am not convinced of the existence of God, and of the truth of religion, it would signify little to me whether or not there were any sacraments; and all the time I should employ in the prosecution of this inquiry, would be lost.

"A great many Christians want instruction concerning the principles and foundations of Christianity; they do not sufficiently consider the certainty and importance of it. Their knowledge of religion does seldom go further than the particular truths of it, and does not reach the general. This is so common a fault, that it may be observed even in those whose profession it is to study religion, and teach it to others.* Some have spent the best part of their

* "A perfect divine ought not only to understand the text of the Old and New Testament so exactly as to have a clear notion of every book in general, and of the grammatical meaning of every text in particular, that so he may be able to reconcile all difficulties, and answer all objections that may arise: as also the state of the Church, as to its doctrine and discipline, in its several ages: but he ought to be thoroughly versed in all the general notions of *Ethics*, taken in their utmost extent, to enable him to resolve such cases of conscience as may occur with judgment and satisfaction: he ought to be master of all the topics of persuasion which can ever lie in his way, that so his exhortations may please and convince those whom he designs to persuade at the same time. Least of all, he ought to be able to answer all the objections which may be, or have been, raised against the

lives in the study of divinity, or in expounding the Scripture, who never seriously examined the arguments for the truth of Christianity, or the divinity of the Scripture. Some are masters of the principal controversies which divide Christians, who would stand mute if they were called back to the first elements of religion, and if they were to maintain against an infidel, that there is a religion, or that the christian religion is true. The people enter yet less than the divines into the examination of the general truths; and there are very few who either attend to them, or indeed believe them as they ought.

"And yet the whole of religion depends upon a firm persuasion concerning the principles of faith; it is that which renders the particular truths effectual to salvation, and which begets piety and the love of virtue. When a man is persuaded that religion proposes nothing but what is certain, he immediately receives with reverence whatsoever it teaches; he feels an inclination in himself to observe its precepts, and he believes a judgment and another life, as if he saw them before his eyes. Such is the efficacy of a true faith, and of a steady persuasion about fundamental truths. But without this persuasion it is

doctrine and discipline of the Church, by its open or secret enemies."—*Wotton on Learning*, pp. 364, 365.

very hard, not to say impossible, to adhere sincerely to religion, and to perform the duties of it. And this is the constant source of the corruption of Christians.

" It may, perhaps, be objected, that all Christians receive the general truths of their creeds, and that these are not questioned but by pagans and atheists. Upon which I shall make two reflections.

" 1. It is but too true, that in the point of religion, there is at this day a great number of persons who entertain very loose opinions, and that do at least border upon Atheism. These pernicious tenets are spread wider than some people think. All the profane men and Deists are not to be found at courts, in armies, or among the learned: there are some in towns, among the vulgar, and even among country clowns. If we examine a little the discourses and apprehensions of men, especially of those whose life is irregular, if we do but begin to reason with them and press them, we may soon perceive the principles of Incredulity and Atheism in many of them. It will be found, that if they do not proceed to that degree of impiety which attacks the very foundations of religion, they harbour at least this fancy, that God doth not narrowly observe men's deportment; that he will not

be so severe as to damn them for some sins they have committed, and that there is not such great harm in gratifying one's passions, and living at the usual rate of the world. These and the like sentiments are general enough, and yet they lead the straight way to Deism, and tend plainly to the subversion of religion. It would be therefore highly necessary, in order to root out such dangerous errors, carefully to establish these great truths: that there is a God, that this God speaks to us in his word, and that whatever the gospel tells us of another life, is most certain. This I say would be altogether needful, if it were but for the instruction of those I have now mentioned, and their number is greater than is commonly imagined.

"2. We may take notice, that though Christians profess to believe the truths of their religion, yet that belief is not lively and strong enough in them all. It is beyond all question that most Christians are so only because they were engaged by their birth in the profession of Christianity; but that after all, they know very little of the truth and divinity of it. They would, in like manner, have been Jews or Pagans, if they had been born in Judaism or Paganism; so that, properly speaking, they cannot be said to have faith; for faith is a persuasion; to

believe, is to be persuaded; and it is impossible to believe a thing right without reason or examination. That which is called faith is commonly nothing else but a confused and general opinion, which makes but very slight impressions upon the heart and mind; but true faith is a greater rarity among Christians than we are aware of. Now as faith is the only principle of piety, so a bad life does chiefly spring from want of faith and from incredulity. And there are two sorts of infidels; some deny and reject divine truths; others do not quite deny them, but they doubt and believe but weakly. The infidels who deny the fundamentals of religion, are not many; but the number of those who doubt, and are not well persuaded, is very great." — *Ostervald on the Causes of the Corruption of Christians.*

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John vii. 14—17.—"*Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught. And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.*"

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ERRATA.

P. 28. line 19, *for* devote *read* to devote.
47. last line, *for* Appendix I. *read* Appendix C.
172. line 22. *for* κοιεῖ *read* ποιεῖ.

SERMON I.

ACTS XIV. PART OF THE 15TH VERSE.

"*We preach unto you, that ye should turn unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein.*"

1...THE Apostles Paul and Barnabas, being driven from the city of Iconium, by an assault made upon them by some Jews and other persons, arrive at Lystra, a neighbouring city: and having here performed a miraculous cure upon a man who had been a cripple from his birth, we are told, that, the people lifted up their voices, and said, (in the language of the province in which the city was)—"The GODS are come down to us in the likeness of men!" That they then called Barnabas, Jupiter, and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker; and that the priest of Jupiter, (whose statue or temple was probably at the gate of the city,) brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and were about to do sacrifice

believe, is to be persuaded; and it is impossible to believe a thing right without reason or examination. That which is called faith is commonly nothing else but a confused and general opinion, which makes but very slight impressions upon the heart and mind; but true faith is a greater rarity among Christians than we are aware of. Now as faith is the only principle of piety, so a bad life does chiefly spring from want of faith and from incredulity. And there are two sorts of infidels; some deny and reject divine truths; others do not quite deny them, but they doubt and believe but weakly. The infidels who deny the fundamentals of religion, are not many; but the number of those who doubt, and are not well persuaded, is very great." — *Ostervald on the Causes of the Corruption of Christians.*

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I. Introduction.—II. Text explained.—III. Importance of giving the plainest, as well as the fullest interpretation of passages in the Bible.—IV. If any man think that he knoweth any thing he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.—V. The sources of human knowledge.—VI. The extent of human knowledge.—VII. Idea of the extent of human knowledge.—VIII. Conclusion.

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SERMON VII.

HUMAN KNOWLEDGE.

1 Cor. xiii. 12.—"*Now we see through a glass darkly.*"

I. Inference from former conclusions.—II. The same more fully stated. — III. Design of the Christian Revelation. —

IV. Explanation of the text.—V. Inquiry leads to humility.—VI. Conclusion.

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SERMON VIII.

THE SCRIPTURE OF TRUTH.

Prov. ii. 3—5.—"*If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.*"

I. Introduction.—II. What we find in the Scriptures.—III. The truth of Christianity must be experienced, in order to be understood.—IV. Object of the Christian ministry.—V. Outline of the great doctrines of the Christian Religion.—VI. Religious knowledge.—VII. Conclusion.

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SERMON IX.

VIRTUE THE KEY TO FAITH.

John vii. 14—17.—"*Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught. And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.*"

I. Introduction.—II. There is no respect of persons with God.—III. Province of Reason.—IV. Employment of the understanding demanded by the exigencies of the present day.—V. How all men are enabled to give answer to every man that asketh

them a reason for the hope which is in them.—VI. Tidings afforded by those who have followed Christ's injunction.—VII. The voice of Christianity.—VIII. Wisdom crieth without.—IX. "How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity?"—X. Shame of the opposers.—XI. Suggestion.—XII. Conclusion.

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SERMON X.

PHARAOH.

Psalm xcv. 8.—"*If ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.*"

I. Voice of conscience.—II. The written word.—III. Hardening of the heart explained in the history of Pharaoh.—IV. Testimony of all history and experience.—V. The instance of Pharaoh designedly conspicuous.—VI. The account of Pharaoh.—VII. Our time of trial.—VIII. The immutable decrees of God.—IX. The misery attendant upon crime uninfluenced by circumstance.—X. Conclusion.

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SERMON XI.

THE TEMPEST STILLED.

Mark iv. 39.—"*He arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.*"

I. Introduction.—II. "There is no peace to the wicked."—III. "There is no man that sinneth not."—IV. Exhortation.—V. "The Light of Life."—VI. The voice of God.—VII. "When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?"—VIII. "Whoso putteth his trust in God, happy is he."—IX. A question.—X. Conclusion.

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and worship; "Images made like to corruptible man, and birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things."

When man did this, says the Apostle, "HE WAS WITHOUT EXCUSE."

BECAUSE "HE KNEW GOD, AND GLORIFIED HIM NOT AS GOD."

VI...Now, if, from the beginning of the world, the invisible things of God have been clearly seen and understood from the things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead:—

If this be the TRUTH—Look well to this conclusion;

Then, do ALL whom I now address, whether they have embraced the faith of Jesus Christ, or whether they have not—whether they, professing that faith outwardly, hold fast that faith and enjoy it inwardly, or whether they do not—yet ALL (to use the words of the inspired apostle) KNOW GOD!* Not in a *full* sense of that expression: but, as did the idolaters of ancient Lystra, as did the "men of Athens,"† as did the poor barbarians of the island of Melita, (who, when the viper fastened

* May we not say, "in the *first* sense of the expression?"

† See Acts xvii.

itself upon the hand of St. Paul, we are told, said among themselves—" No doubt this man is a murderer whom VENGEANCE suffereth not to live;*) As did and do, in a word, all the dwellers upon earth, KNOW AND FEEL THAT THERE IS A GOD ABOVE THEM.†

VII...And, to those who possess this knowledge, but with whom " Christ crucified" is an " offence," a stumbling block, or foolishness: We preach, only, that they should turn unto the God whom they know: who is about their path, and about their bed, spying out all their ways; . . . Who is declared, in the lesson which is gone out through all lands, and its words to the ends of the world—who " never left himself without *witness*, in that he did GOOD: sending rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, and filling the hearts of men with joy and gladness." Whose boundless justice, from his Wisdom might be deemed necessarily to flow: but which Justice is written on high, in letters of light, which " he who runs may read," while the simple mind can see how—" in each breast is placed a friendly monitor, that prompts,

* Acts xxviii. 4.

† THE DEVILS BELIEVE, AND TREMBLE.

and worship; "Images made like to corru
tible man, and birds, and four-footed beas
and creeping things."

When man did this, says the Apostle, "
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informs, directs, encourages, forbids;" which can watch and observe, how, "on unknown evil grief attends," and "joy on secret good!" Which knows, that "conscience acts with tenfold force, when sickness, age, or pain stands tottering on the precipice of death:" and "how such horror gnaws the guilty soul of dying sinners, while the good man sleeps peaceful and calm, and with a smile expires."*

The simple mind, we maintain, reasons *justly* from such things, when it becomes impressed with the *conviction* that—"Verily there is *a reward for the righteous:* doubtless there is a God that *judgeth* the earth."†

* Glynn. † Ps. lviii. 11.

SERMON II.

ROMANS I. 20.

" *The invisible things of HIM, from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.*"

I...IF the invisible things of God, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead:—

It is a subject, beyond all others, the most important which can occupy our reflections—to consider, what is the *nature* of that knowledge of the Supreme Governor of the universe, which the apostle St. Paul tells us, in the words of our text, has always been, and is always, to be " understood," from our contemplation of the world around us :—from " the things that are made." * I AM ALPHA

* " I am far from justifying," says Paley, " the opinion of those who ' thought it a thing incredible, that God should raise the dead :' but I admit, that it is first necessary to be persuaded that there is a God to do so."—NAT. THEOL. 357. See Appendix A.

AND OMEGA, SAITH THE LORD, THE BEGINNING AND THE ENDING, WHICH IS, AND WHICH WAS, AND WHICH IS TO COME, THE ALMIGHTY.*

We preach that HE should be the beginning and the ending of every human thought.

II...It is not so. For man is "careful, and troubled about many things."† And, "indeed, can never attain, in the shape of conviction, a lively idea of his own position on the scale of the universe, unless he look with undistracted attention above and around him, and put forth all the energies of his intellect, with a view to explore the vast scheme of existence of which he forms a part. As long as he confines his curiosity to the history of his fellow-men, wondering at their progress from the tangled forest to the crowded city; shuddering at the sanguinary wars, foreign or domestic, of which almost every field on the globe has at one time or another been the theatre; poring over obsolete principles of philosophy and legislation, or devising new combinations for the regulation of transitory

* Rev. i. 8.

† "Virorum nugæ negotia vocantur." See Luke x. 41, 42; Prov. xvii. 24.

interests—so long will he remain unconscious of the much more exalted pursuits for which his faculties are destined. The little routine of each succeeding day leads him into notions altogether false as to the real purpose for which life was given him. Looking upon the immediate object of his avarice or ambition as exclusively worthy of his care—his busy thought by day, his feverish dream by night—he feels an exaggerated sense of his own importance that precludes him from bestowing a single reflection upon the commencement, the termination, and the final issue of the sixty years—an hour, nay, not a minute of eternity—which are allotted to his share."* Led away by the wiles of the "rulers of the darkness of this world," † man forgets God: or, as the inspired writer expresses it, he does not "like"‡ to retain God in his knowledge. God, therefore, gives him over to a reprobate mind: to do those things which are "not convenient:"§ to be lured away into the midst of the vanities and the crimes which he has preferred: to entertain thoughts contrary to the deductions of all sound reason, inconsistent with every law of Truth.

* Whewell.
† Eph. vi. 12.
‡ Rom. i. 28.
§ Rom. i. 28.

III..." Surely," says Solomon, " vain are all men by nature, who are ignorant of God, and could not, out of the good things that are seen, know him that is: neither by considering the works, did acknowledge the workmaster; but deemed either fire, or wind, or the swift air, or the circle of the stars, or the violent water, or the lights of heaven, to be the gods which govern the world. With whose beauty, if they being delighted, took them to be gods; let them know how much better the Lord of them is: for the first author of beauty hath created them. And if they were astonished at their power and virtue, let them understand by them, how much mightier HE is that MADE them. For by the greatness and beauty of the CREATURES, proportionably the MAKER of them is seen." *

It is written in the book of Job,† " *Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?*"—(*i. e.*) Canst thou find out, and comprehend ALL that belongs to his Godhead?

" WE SEE THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY," says St. Paul.

* Wisd. xiii. † Job xi. 7.

"WE KNOW IN PART."

"When that which is *perfect* is come, then that which is *in part* shall be done away."* Nevertheless, St. Paul also says, "The invisible things of Him ARE *clearly seen*, being *understood* by the things that are made, even *his eternal power and Godhead!*"

In another place, St. Paul says, "*Every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God.*"†

Again,—"*Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*" ‡

IV...There is no mind which does not possess § conviction as to the truth of the self-evident proposition of the existence of a God, which can understand that THINGS THAT ARE MADE MUST HAVE HAD A MAKER.

Therefore, while we contemplate the immensity, the beauty, and the harmony of the

* See Rom. xiii. Deut. xxix. 29. Rom. xi. 33.

† Heb. iii. 4.

‡ Heb. xi. 3; and see the parallel passages.

§ "The belief in a God," it was once said, "is a fixed star in the minds of men, which is as plainly seen by the naked eye of the peasant, as through the telescope of the philosopher."

universe;—while we look forth, and observe, how all things are formed, sustained, regulated and governed by never-changing laws of the most wondrous wisdom:—We *see* how "the face of nature, lying visible before us, is a tissue of effects produced by a train of operations depending upon one another:" —that if we trace this line up to its original, it leads us to God, "the fountain of all powers, and intelligent disposer of all things."*

Such design, we KNOW, "must have had a designer," † which designer is GOD! ‡

v..." The *fool*," says the Psalmist, "hath said in his heart, There is no God." § That is, the *desperately-wicked* person hath said this [for this is the meaning of the word *fool* as used in the original language in which the Psalm was written]. And why has the

* See Abraham Tucker's Light of Nature, vol. v. and vol. vii. p. 627.

† See Paley's Nat. Theol. c. xxiii.

‡ See Appendix B.

§ Ps. xiv. 1. "Folly is a term employed in Hebrew to signify the greatest possible degree of guilt." See "A New Translation of the book of Psalms from the original Hebrew, with explanatory Notes, by W. French, D.D. and G. Skinner," p. 19.

desperate sinner *said* this? Why has he not liked to retain God in his knowledge; but has sought for blindness of heart, and darkness of understanding on this subject?

Because he knows that the voice of nature proclaims—not only that *there is a God over all;* but that that God also "*executeth judgment in the earth.*" *

The wicked man *knows* that Almighty God will pass judgment on his deeds.† It is, therefore, disagreeable to the wicked man to retain God in his knowledge. He does not like this Light! He prefers the darkness! ‡ And God gives him over "to a reprobate mind:"—suffers him to be enveloped in the "strong delusion" § which he has sought, and he *saith* in his heart, "there is no God!"

VI...Possessing, however, sound conviction, on that first simple truth, that earliest portion of the knowledge, which the wise man declares —"Surely vain are all men by nature" who are ignorant of it. Possessing sound conviction, on this most important point, we proceed

* Ps. lviii. 11. See Sermon V.
† Heb. x. 27. ‡ John iii. 19.
§ See 2 Thess. ii. See also Luke v. 8.

*be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If, therefore, the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"**

* Matt. vi. 22, 23. See Appendix D.

SERMON III.

MATTHEW XXVI. 41.

"*The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*"

I...As the existence of God is the foundation of all Religious Truth, the history of religion may be said to commence with our first parents' transgression, when "*by one man sin entered into the world:*"*—when man, by his transgression, incurring the vengeance of God, fell from his original state of unsullied happiness and peace;—when the Lord "*looked, and wondered that there was no intercessor, and, therefore, his arm brought salvation:*"†—when the mysterious proclamation came forth, which declared that the "*seed of the woman*" should "*bruise the serpent's head.*"‡

* Rom. v. 12. See Appendix E.

† Isaiah lix. 16. ‡ Gen. iii. 15.

wonders that He doeth for the children of men!" *

Ignorance is proud, and ungodliness, perhaps, setteth up its horn!

"Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird now up thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb? When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddling band for it, and brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors, and said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed? Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; and caused the dayspring to know his place; that it might take hold of the ends of the earth, that the

* Psalm cvii. 8.

wicked might be shaken out of it? Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth? Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death? Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth? declare if thou knowest it at all. Where is the way where light dwelleth? and as for darkness, where is the place thereof, that thou shouldest take it to the bound thereof, and that thou shouldest know the paths to the house thereof? Knowest thou it, because thou wast then born? or because the number of thy days is great? Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons? Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth? Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee? Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are? Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? or who hath given understanding to the heart?"*

* See Job xxxviii.

The period will arrive, when man will know — that which he now so studiously shuts his eyes against, viz. that in life it is his fate to be ignorant, and his duty to be humble.

The time will come when Almighty God "will abundantly vindicate himself before men and angels, and "*all mouths shall be stopped before him.*"

Let man, therefore, listen to the voice which daily tells him to lay his hand upon his mouth and say, "*Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further.*" *

"He that exalteth himself shall be abased, but he that humbleth himself will be exalted."† "God *resisteth* the *proud,* but giveth *grace* to the *humble.*"‡ "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."§ "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you! Cleanse your hands—purify your hearts."||—"Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth!"¶

* Job xl. 5.
† See Luke xviii.
‡ James iv. 6.
§ James iv. 10.
|| Ibid. 8.
¶ Matt. vii. 7, 8.

"Ye have heard of the patience of Job: and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." *

"Behold," said Job, "I am vile."—"I abhor myself, and repent." †

"So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning," and Job "died, being old and full of days." ‡

Be ye SURE that the Lord he is God! That he is gracious, and that his mercy is everlasting §—that though we have rebelled against Him, and have disobeyed His voice, that to Him "belong mercies and forgivenesses!" ‖ Therefore, "GO YOUR WAY INTO HIS GATES WITH THANKSGIVING, AND INTO HIS COURTS WITH PRAISE: BE THANKFUL UNTO HIM, AND SPEAK GOOD OF HIS NAME." ¶

Knowing the Almighty power, and the wisdom of God; and knowing, also, from our extreme weakness, littleness, and ignorance, that submission to His will, and that the most unqualified, is our "reasonable service;" in

* James v. 11.
† Job xl. 4; xlii. 6.
‡ Job xlii. 12, 17.
§ See Psalm c.
‖ See Dan. ix. 9, 10.
¶ Psalm c. See Ecclus. xxxix. 16, and Appendix C.

submissive confidence we must believe, that, as bounteous goodness is seen to be the end and design of all those parts of His providence which we can comprehend, so the same will pervades each part of his government, which we do not at present comprehend.

"What I understand," said ancient wisdom, "I admire: and am fully convinced to be every way worthy of its author. And, therefore, I conclude what I understand not to be equally excellent, and that it would appear so, if I understood all its concerns."* And "From the confessed and felt imperfection of our knowledge, we ought to presume, that there may be consequences which are hidden from us; from the benevolence which pervades the general designs of nature, we ought also to presume that those consequences, if they could enter into our calculation, would turn the balance on the favourable side."†

VII...But to conclude:—

While we preach that ye should turn unto

* Socrates.

† Paley, Nat. Theol. p. 308. See also Appendix.

"The maker of a watch," (it has been remarked) "or the builder of a ship, is not to be blamed, because a spectator cannot discover either the beauty or the use of disjointed parts."—*Watson's Reply to Paine*, p. 238.

God; while we cry aloud, and exhort and entreat you to turn unto God, and while we endeavour to remind you of how "*the invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, are* CLEARLY *seen, being understood by the things that are made—even his eternal Power and Godhead:*"—Let it not be imagined by any man, that we would dare to imply, that any one branch of knowledge, more than another, was ever prosecuted by carelessness, or attained unto by sloth;—Or, that things were ever CLEARLY seen by those who did not *wish* to see them, or understood by those who *endeavoured not to understand* them.

The things of God are not clearly seen by the careless: nor are they understood by those who blind themselves against them.

Light has no fellowship with darkness. And there are works of light, and works of darkness. And men, if they wish to *see*, will come to the *light;* if not, they enter the *darkness*, where they cannot see.

They "KNOW"* that there is light; but some love the darkness rather than the light!†

"*The light of the body is the eye: if, therefore, thine eye be single, thy whole body shall*

* See Sermon I. p. 8. † See John iii. 19.

*be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If, therefore, the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"**

* Matt. vi. 22, 23. See Appendix D.

SERMON III.

MATTHEW XXVI. 41.

"*The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*"

I...As the existence of God is the foundation of all Religious Truth, the history of religion may be said to commence with our first parents' transgression, when "*by one man sin entered into the world:*"*—when man, by his transgression, incurring the vengeance of God, fell from his original state of unsullied happiness and peace;—when the Lord "*looked, and wondered that there was no intercessor, and, therefore, his arm brought salvation:*"†—when the mysterious proclamation came forth, which declared that the "*seed of the woman*" should "*bruise the serpent's head.*"‡

* Rom. v. 12. See Appendix E.

† Isaiah lix. 16. ‡ Gen. iii. 15.

II...No one, we presume, will attempt to deny the imperfection and depravity of human nature: although we must expect that there ever will be those who will make it their business to speculate on the origin of that imperfection, and endeavour to believe, or to persuade others that they do believe, that it needs no remedy or support:—" Filthy dreamers,"—clouds they are without water, carried about of winds:—trees whose fruit withereth!—Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever!*

Man has always been conscious of his fallen state, to whatever origin he has sought to ascribe this degeneracy, at different periods, and under the different circumstances in which he has been placed.

III...If you had leisure and opportunity, devote your attention to the examination of the most ancient traditions and beliefs which exist in the history of the world: you would find constant reference made, to a time *previous* to that in which the penal suffering of our degraded nature was experienced—a time when man was free from care, from labour,

* Jude.

and from sorrow; when old age was unknown, when man's limbs were braced with perpetual vigour, and disease was unfelt; when the fruits of the earth sprang up spontaneously and abundantly:* before man's deeds had brought on man the curse, under which he eats of the fruits of the earth in sorrow, while thorns and thistles are brought forth to him, and in the sweat of his face he eats his bread.

The thoughtful of past times distinctly perceived the impurity and weakness of human nature, although they were not able to explain the cause of this corruption. And while some approached the truth, yet the truth was concealed, and none could assign the true origin of what each was conscious of in himself — viz. the depravity of human nature.

IV...If we wished to hold forth to view the nature, and possible extent, of any *physical* disorder, we should, perhaps, select from the writings of those who had taken upon themselves to describe that disorder, as many different cases of it as possible, whereby to enable ourselves to form an idea of it in its

* See Appendix E.

different stages. And an extreme case, an instance in which the disorder had long been permitted to make its ravages unrestrained, would, in all probability, strike the mind as the most alarming manifestation of it.

v...Therefore, in order to represent the nature of moral disorder, and the extent to which it may advance : in a similar manner, we select for observation, as many and as various instances as possible of the disease in its different degrees. And we contemplate it in its most alarming point of view, in an extreme case.

vi...Consequently, while we wish to attract the attention of man towards the observation of that moral corruption with which man is born into this world, and which he may, with the assistance of his Maker, remediate, or, contrary to his Maker's will, cherish, as he himself thinks fit; while we are desirous of exhibiting to the minds of men an instance of the possible ascendency which this disease may attain, we ask of man only to allow his reflection to dwell on the history of some one who has permitted his corrupt inclinations to lead him always whither they listed, and who has suffered the depravity with which he was born

to grow with his growth, and strengthen with his strength.

VII...Individuals are to be met with in the world in whom there is an absence of all moral perceptions! Who will assert that virtue and vice are words to which no definitive meaning can possibly be attached: Who will deny the existence of the human will,* and, perhaps, maintain that they are by no means satisfied with the proofs which the world brings forward, of the existence of God!

Now, although no man can be said to be in a state of mind thoroughly sound, sin being always, to a certain extent, present with us in this world, and our perceptions being always, therefore, liable to being falsified: yet the unsoundness of our minds has its degrees; and as long as our judgments are not erroneous in excess, and while we retain power of controlling our actions, in the common language of the world, we are termed sane.

When, however, our minds, either partially or generally, are in a diseased state, *exceeding* this so called normal condition, and when there is "an aberration of any sensation or intellectual power from this state without the

* See Appendix F.

capacity of distinguishing the diseased state," this has received the common name of "insanity."

But as the total loss of one physical faculty does not necessarily prevent the exercise of other faculties which we possess; and, as the deaf may see, the blind hear, and the lame converse; so mental insanity may be partial: and it does not follow, but that he who denies the existence of free will in man, or who doubts the being of his Maker, may be able to transact, with acuteness and propriety, the common business of life; nay, we may say, that where the moral perceptions are to such excess morbid, as that we may term them dead, or obliterated: in the same individual we may contemplate, with melancholy admiration, the hero, the statesman, or the poet! "And surely, if there be in human things, an affecting representation, of a mind lost to every function of a healthy understanding, incapable of rising from effects to causes, or of tracing the relations of things,—a mind deserted by its rightful guardian, and left the unprotected victim of every wild delusion that flutters by,—it is to be found in him, who, possessed of the senses of a living man, can stand before the fair face of creation, and say in his heart—

'there is no God.'" * But to such an one we are able to refer, for knowledge of the possible extent to which the moral depravity of man, when neglected and indulged, will proceed. So strong is the consequent delusion, so great is the darkness.† "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

VIII..."By one man," we read, "sin entered into the world, and death by sin."‡ The bare fact, of sin, sorrow, and death, being thus introduced, is all we are acquainted with. There were "angels who kept not their first estate:"§ man kept not his: but transgressed, and fell. So far we know;—"The secret things belong unto the Lord our God."||

To those who would ask,—Are there any confirmations in nature of the simple, brief, and to us, possibly, strange account of the fall of man, as delivered by Moses? we

* Abercrombie.

† See 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12. Matt. vi. 22, 23.

‡ Rom. v. 12. § Jude 6. || Deut. xxix. 29.

answer—all nature and all history unite to confirm that account; nor can the existence of evil receive the shadow of any explanation, without reference being made to the origin of it as recorded in the book of Genesis.

If you would "answer the fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit:"* Ask him to give account, as it is incumbent upon him to do, otherwise than as in the sacred volume is given, of the origin of sin and sorrow. Demand of him the reason, why it is, that the good which man would, man does not: while the evil which man would not, that he does. Ask him, whence came the law, the existence of which even he will not deny, which makes, when he would do good, evil to be present with him. And desire him to tell who can deliver him from the body of this death.†

Ask him to give account of the mysterious enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman.‡

Ask him, why "man alone, of all animals, is necessitated to labour for subsistence; while they are maintained by the spontaneous bounty of nature, graze the uncultivated field, drink

* Prov. xxvi. 5. See Appendix.

† See Rom. vii. 15. ‡ See Gen. iii. 14, 15.

of the limpid stream, and roam the forest clad in native garments," while "man cannot obtain the conveniences, nor even the necessaries of life, without incessant toil and industry."* Demand, to what source are we to be conducted, by the superior penetration assumed by him who opposes, whence to obtain clearer information, than we do in reading the words, "Unto Adam the Lord God said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."†

IX...At the same time, let us not forget that there are persons in the world, with whom to argue on certain points, is "worse than labour in vain." And not only is "an endeavour to convince MADMEN of their errors by reasoning,

* Holden.

† Gen. iii. 17—19. See Appendix G.

folly in those who attempt it, since there is always in madness the firmest conviction of the truth of what is false, and which the clearest and most circumstantial evidence cannot remove;" but, "in cases where the difficulty is greatest, the attempt to argue is productive of *additional mischief*." "Reasoning will rather excite than diminish deranged feelings;" and if "we mistake the love of our opinions for the love of truth, because we suppose our opinions true.... the affections being now misplaced, they are a greater impediment to us in the pursuit of truth than if we had no affections at all concerning it."*

"If our gospel be hid," says St. Paul, "it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."† Therefore "giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

* See Bishop Warburton's Sermon on the Nature and Condition of Truth, in his Works, vol. v.

† 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off."*

x...But, as a christian minister is, for the most part, supposed to address friends to the cause on which he speaks, and not adversaries; and as we feel it our duty strongly to remind our hearers of what they believe, rather than to confine ourselves to the demonstration of those things which our enemies dispute:—let us return to the more immediate object of our reflections, viz. the *result* of our first parents' transgression.

We learn from the Scriptures that "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth;"† that "there is no man which sinneth not;"‡ "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?"§ "What is man, that he should be clean, and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?"‖ "Behold," says the Psalmist, "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."¶

* 2 Pet. i. 5.
† Gen. viii. 21.
‡ 2 Chron. vi. 36.
§ Job xiv. 4.
‖ Job xv. 14.
¶ Psalm li. 5.

"There is none that doeth good, no not one."* "Foolishness," says Solomon, "is bound in the heart of a child."† "The spirit indeed is willing," says our Lord, "but the flesh is weak."‡

St. Paul says, "That which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I." "When I would do good, evil is present with me."§ And all, we *presume*, are conscious of this frailty of our nature: and that no sane man will deny the existence of this constant warfare between reason and natural inclination.

XI...Nor will any one produce evidence to show, that we have given an exaggerated account of the result of suffering the inclinations with which we were born to gain complete ascendency over us. The penal disorder which we inherit, if left to itself to increase and spread, will make the soul of man to become at last the all corrupt thing which animates deceit, covetousness, lies, fierceness, ingratitude, murder!—the spirit which moves those "FIGURES of mankind," which are "without natural affection:" trees, whose fruit withereth, twice dead,

* Psalm liii. 3.
† Prov. xxii. 15.
‡ Matt. xxvi. 41.
§ Rom. vii. 15, 21.

plucked up by the roots. Clouds without water, carried about of winds! Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame! Wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever!" *

These are they, who now "being *past* feeling, have *given themselves over* to work all uncleanness with *greediness*," † and not only themselves have "pleasure in unrighteousness," ‡ and "draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope," § but have pleasure in them that do these things. ||

XII...To these terrible truths reflection conducts us. Terrible they are to the minds of all: however different the pious horror of a christian mind be, from that "fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries," which they feel who have "trodden under foot the Son of God, and done despite to the spirit of grace."

"It *is* a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

* Jude.
† Eph. iv. 19.
‡ 2 Thess. ii. 12.
§ Isaiah v. 18.
|| Rom. i. 32. See Leland on the Advantage and Necessity of the Christian Revelation.

"Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." *

"Be watchful, therefore, and strengthen the things which remain, and are ready to die! Remember how ye have received and heard: and HOLD FAST and REPENT." †

* See Heb. x. † See Rev. iii. 2, 3.

SERMON IV.

ACTS XIV. PART OF THE 15TH VERSE.

"*We preach unto you, that ye should turn unto the living God.*"

I...WHEN, my brethren, we were last together, attempt was made at the illustration of the subject of the natural depravity of man, by bringing to your notice a supposititious case, in which the moral disorder which we all inherit, had been allowed to proceed unrestrained, until it had to such an extent infected the soul, as, by its corruption, to have deadened all the moral perception of man, and to have overshadowed the mind in the thick darkness of one "strong delusion."

"Because they received not the love of truth, that they might be saved," says the apostle, "God shall send them *strong delusion*, that they should believe a LIE: that they

all might be DAMNED, who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."*

II...By consequence of our very frailty, we require startling instances of the results of the indulgence of that frailty, to attract the attention of our besotted and elusive understandings. On which account, an *extreme case*, and not an instance of criminal life in its earliest manifestations, was supposed for contemplation.

To the reflecting mind, it is a question, whether the results of vice be not as *distinctly* seen in the character of the wayward youth, as in that of the aged and hardened sinner. But the multitude cannot be said to be given to reflection. A lame boy attracts the notice and pity of few in the passing crowd—it is the exposed wound, and the creature with every limb amputated, round which the numbers throng. And prodigies and monsters of iniquity, in their crowns of woe and vests of shame, must be set up on high, as beacons for the multitude.

III...If *attention* be gained only, much may be said to be done. In calling men to their

* 2 Thess. ii. 10—12.

God, we might speak of life's miseries, under which we pine—of the afflictions, under which we need consolations—of bereavements, under which we need hope. But, for the present, we neglect this particular part of our subject, under the idea of the few who require to be reminded that human life is full of trouble.*

My chief object now is, by representing to you the nature of human depravity, to induce you to undertake, with the humility, the earnestness, and the determination which the subject demands, the commencement of religious reflection, in asking yourselves the question, Is there no remedy for man's moral corruption?

IV...When we contemplate such an example, as, when we were last together, allusion was made to, in the character of one, who is blind to the moral differences of actions — who cannot see any distinction between virtue and vice; who has lost all faculty of discriminating good from bad, noble from mean, kindness from brutishness; who "being past feeling,"† as the apostle expresses it, has "given himself over" to work all iniquity with *greediness*, and with darkened understanding seeks to

* See Appendix H. † Eph. iv. 19.

slake, as it appears, a thirst of wickedness in injury of man and insult of his God;—when we contemplate such an instance of human depravity, and possibly in the same individual discern mental ability, talent, learning, and *acuteness* of perception, on all other but moral questions; when, in the person of the merchant, the soldier, the statesman, or the poet, we see all but the "one thing needful;" and when we observe, that neither affluence, success unbroken, power, or fame, can supply the place of what has been laid aside, or unsought for; but that, surrounded with wealth unlimited, or spoils and trophies,—clothed in the robes of state authority, or wreathed with the laurels of literary eminence —man, without the knowledge, which is easiest of attainment, and which is placed on the surface of things,* is a more miserable being than language can tell: when we look around, and perceive, that through all nature, there is a *calm completeness*, (if such an expression may be used) which the human mind, without the knowledge alluded to,† does not enjoy; but which, possessing that knowledge, it peculiarly

* See the books of Solomon; James iii. 17; Psalm cxlv. 9; cxix. 130.

† See 1 Cor. xv. 34.

does enjoy: * does it not *appear*, at least, as if human will, allying itself to the spirit of evil, reared its lonely horn † on earth, against Him who formed man for happiness, and who designed that the LIFE of that happiness should be that "one thing needful?" ‡ To some this does appear; to others it may not. But if there be any, who will to themselves confess the consciousness of their own sufferings, will they not also ask themselves, Is there no remedy?

v...Does not man, on seeing man in such a case as we have pictured, entertain the simple thought, "How wretched is this to behold?

* We would here propose the question, Is not that our good "which does us good?"

† See Psalm lxxv.

‡ The "one thing needful" is an earnest desire of spiritual instruction and improvement; or, in other words, a serious and constant regard to our everlasting welfare."—"To those who, like Mary of Bethany, have chosen this one thing as the object of their first desire, this encouragement remains: it is the 'good part' they have chosen, and while perishableness is written upon every earthly object, and calamity, and time, and death, take away the things on which others rely, the part they have chosen the God of all is engaged to uphold; and the declaration of his voice to the meek and constant, the devout and docile Jewess, is a pledge also to them, that it shall never be taken away."

Could I arrive at that state of mind? Is there no help? Is there no refuge? Is there no home for that wanderer? No medicine for that spirit—no cure for that evil?"

We do naturally ask ourselves such questions on witnessing such a case as we have supposed.

VI...We know that this world has no remedy to offer. The evil is too vast, the disorder too great, for the powers of this world alone either to cause or to relieve.

The common troubles of life can teach us, that on earth there is nothing to afford us real consolation or support, even under the pressure of *these*, which, alike in *weight*, appear to be measured to all.

But this *extremity* of woe, this *monstrous* suffering—defying all human charity—scorning all human aid! Earth's medicaments in application add to that they cannot cure! And nothing earth affords touches the texture of this woe! *

* "Can a man bind a thought with chains, or carry imaginations in the palm of his hand? Can the beauty of the peacock's train, or the ostrich's plume, be delicious to the palate and the throat? Does the hand intermeddle with the joys of the heart? or darkness, that hides the naked, make him warm?"—*Jeremy Taylor.*

VII...Therefore, is it unwise to consider, whether, beyond the SIGHT of man, there may not be a force to move the malady, which thus all visible things defies? "The *wind* bloweth where it listeth"—and before its viewless power the yellow corn-fields wave—the stately trees bend, and the white sail passes from the sight. "The wind bloweth, and we hear the sound thereof, but we cannot tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth."

But we have seen the goodness of Him who NEVER left himself without witness:—we know that the God who is above is compassionate, pitiful, and merciful—that he is "mighty in strength"—that he is "clothed with strength"—that nothing is "too hard for the Lord"—that he is God Almighty!—and that he is "merciful and gracious"—"full of compassion"—"the fountain of all goodness"—"the Father of all mercies!"

Does not the question, therefore, now suggest itself,—May not He, whose very name is goodness,* and whose will is, as we know,†

* The Saxon word ȝoꝺ signifies also good; and "the same word," says Johnson, "passes in both senses, with only accidental variations, through all the Teutonic dialects."

† See Appendix I.

the *happiness* of his creatures—may not He, in his infinite mercy, have provided a remedy for sin and sorrow? Could not His hand heal the sick? Could not HE cleanse the lepers?*

Is it not wisdom—is it not our hope—to seek the living GOD, who MADE heaven and earth, the sea, and all things that are therein! "Who is Lord of heaven and earth"—who giveth to all LIFE, and BREATH, and ALL THINGS."—That we should SEEK Him, if haply we might FEEL after Him, and FIND Him—who is not far from every one of us, for "in Him we LIVE, and MOVE, and have our being."† "To whom" else "shall we go?"‡ We *must* look beyond this earth—we *must* look beyond the scene around us—for support and comfort, for instruction and peace of mind, for assistance and strength, for health, of understanding and direction in our ways.

We are vile and abject—"shapen in iniquity,"§ and "born to trouble."‖ "There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not:"¶ "Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?"**

* See Lev. xiv. 2, 7. Is. lii. 15. 1 Pet. i. 2.
† Acts xvii. 27. ‡ See John vi. 68. § Psalm li. 5.
‖ Job v. 7. ¶ Eccles. vii. 20. ** Prov. xx. 9.

"In many things we ALL offend:"* and "If we say that we have no sin, the TRUTH is not in us."†

"The thoughts of mortal men are miserable, and our devices are but uncertain; for the corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind."‡

But, let us look upwards, in hope, unto our God! — unto Him who made us,—unto Him who created man "upright,"§ — the merciful Father who formed man "in his own image," and "blessed man, and said, Be ye fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth;||" — unto Him ye "free among the dead;"¶—unto Him who is above all principality, power, and might: who "stilleth the raging of the seas, and the madness of his people."** We preach that ye should turn unto Him!

* James iii. 2, 3. † 1 John i. 8.

‡ Wisd. ix. 14, 15. § Eccles. vii. 29.

|| Gen. i. 31—"And God saw all that he had made, and behold it was very good."

¶ Psalm lxxxviii. 5. Lev. xiii. 45.

** Psalm lxv. 7.

You *know** that He "sitteth on the throne!" You *know* that power belongeth unto Him that sitteth on the throne! "Be ye *sure* that the Lord he *is* God:† it *is* he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we *are* his people, and the sheep of his pasture!"

We preach that ye should turn unto HIM!

* Rom. i. 21.

† IF NOT, WHERE, AND WHO IS HE?

SERMON V.

HEB. XI. PART OF 6TH VERSE.

"*He that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.*"

I...AT the commencement of a series of discourses, on subjects to which I have been desirous of drawing your attention lately, I endeavoured to bring to your minds, in as plain and simple a form as possible, the kind of reasoning by which we arrive at conviction respecting the Being and the Attributes of Almighty God.

Attempt was made to show HOW "the invisible things of Him," as St. Paul tells us, "from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made."

A part, however, of the Providence or moral government of God, towards which I am desirous of calling your attention this evening,

has been purposely omitted from our former reflections, being deemed more suited to our distinct consideration, as the theme of this present discourse. The subject alluded to is the retributive justice of Almighty God—the knowledge which we are able to derive from the contemplation of our ownselves, the observation of our fellow-creatures—from the history of ourselves, the history of others—from the history of individuals, and the history of nations: that the "God of all the kingdoms of the earth" punishes certain actions, while he rewards others: that He turns from those who turn from him: that He comes to those who come to him: and "is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

II...The words which compose our text are particularly plain, and simple, and forcible:—"He that cometh to God, must believe that He is, and, that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

That is—he that cometh to God, to worship him and serve him, *must* necessarily first believe that there is a God to worship and to serve: he *must* have a reasonable and firm belief on this point, *first of all.*

We are "far from justifying the opinion of

those, who thought it a thing incredible that God should raise the dead; but we admit that it is first necessary to be persuaded that there is a God to do so."* Therefore, he that cometh to God, must first believe that He is.

But, next, he must believe, as the inspired apostle informs us, and to whose declaration, we presume, our own reflections bear witness, —next, he must believe, that God "is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." That is, that as He is infinitely powerful, wise, and good, so also He is infinitely just; and that, therefore, He will reward those who act in accordance with his will, and punish those who do not; that He will withdraw himself from those who withdraw themselves from him; and draw nigh unto those who draw nigh unto him.

III...Now, out of the different modes of reasoning, by which a sound mind† may arrive at conviction on this head: from the various grounds on which we conceive the understanding‡ may erect its persuasion of this

* See Paley's Nat. Theol. p. 357.

† See Sermon III. p. 31.

‡ "It is on the wings of the CHERUBIM," *i. e.* (according to the interpretation of the ancient Hebrew doctors,) the

truth, let us select those which are the simplest, and the nearest (so to speak) to the comprehension of all;—and which are to be found, as before was intimated, in the contemplation of our ownselves: in our own history, and the history of others: which teaches us, that Almighty God punishes mankind for certain deeds, while he rewards mankind for others; that, to the mind which seeks God, God approaches; and that from that mind which turns from God, the Spirit of God recedes.

Did we not believe—did we not feel convinced that God would reward those who diligently sought him, we should have, at the best, an uncertain hope only, whereon to rest the reasonableness of entering upon such an undertaking as the work of coming unto God. Therefore, he that cometh unto God, must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those that diligently seek him.

intellectual powers and energies, that we must be borne up to the "pure empyrean."

"If a man love me," said Jesus, "he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." John xiv. 23.—It is written of Saul, that "the Spirit of the Lord departed from him, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him." 1 Sam. xvi. 14.

IV...In the first place, I wish to direct your attention to the consideration of the principle of *conscience.*

The word conscience is one of common use; and the existence of the principle which it signifies is sufficiently obvious to the minds of most men.

Of course, however, there are persons to be found in the world, who would make the existence of a moral sense in the mind of man a question; and, possibly, those who would deny the existence of such a principle altogether:* who would "put darkness for light, and light for darkness; bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter."†

St. Paul, in his first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, speaks of the wrath of God being revealed against the Gentiles, because they held the "TRUTH" in unrighteousness.

What TRUTH, therefore, did they hold in unrighteousness? Or, rather, *how* did they hold "the truth" in unrighteousness?

The apostle explains his meaning in the following words:—"Because," he says, "that

* And, who would deny, as was said long ago, that two added to two made four, if their interests were effected by the position.

† Is. v. 20.

which may be known of God is MANIFEST in them; for God hath showed it unto them." That is—that portion of the knowledge of God, and of human duty, which the human mind, without *special* assistance, could attain unto—that portion of knowledge, that *truth*, man neglected and corrupted, and became "filled with all unrighteousness;" and "knowing the judgment of God, that they who commit such things are worthy of death, not only did the same, but had PLEASURE in them that did them."* For which cause, even because "THEY DID NOT LIKE to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to vile affections, and a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient."

Again; St. Paul, in the second chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, is sufficiently positive in his declaration of the existence of an universal principle, or sense, in the mind of man, placed there to approve of certain actions and to condemn others—to good actions, pleasure as the consequence accruing: to bad actions, pain. The latter, being the warning of God's disapproval; the former, intimating the reverse.

* Rom. i. 32. See also John xviii. 37. Rom. ii. 8.

"When the Gentiles," says St. Paul, "which have not the law, do, by nature, the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law WRITTEN IN THEIR HEARTS, —their conscience also bearing witness, AND THEIR THOUGHTS THE MEANWHILE ACCUSING, OR ELSE EXCUSING ONE ANOTHER."

I consider this to be a plain and positive declaration of man's possessing what is commonly understood by a principle of *conscience* —a power within him, placed there by the wisdom of his Maker, to enable him to discriminate between right and wrong, between good and bad. And I deem this passage sufficient, to the purpose of showing the scriptural authority we possess, for maintaining the doctrine of a moral sense.

It may not, however, be useless to remind you of one or two other passages bearing upon the subject.

"The SPIRIT OF MAN," says Solomon, "is the CANDLE of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly."*

"The Spirit itself," says St. Paul, "beareth witness with OUR SPIRIT."†

* Prov. xx. 27. † Rom. viii. 16.

Speaking of our Saviour Christ, St. John writes, "That was the true light, which LIGHTETH EVERY MAN THAT COMETH INTO THE WORLD."*

"If our heart condemn us," says St. John, "God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God."† But, if our *heart* condemn us, *God* will condemn us also. For He it is who is then condemning us.

If our conscience, upon due self-examination, be at peace, in the conviction of our labouring in the path which is right—of our striving, to our best endeavour, to know the truth, to keep the truth, and to follow it, then may we have "*confidence*," says St. John; then *do* we have "confidence toward God:" that is, we enjoy a hope, sufficiently "sure and certain" to set our minds at rest, that Almighty God will not condemn us.

On the other hand, if our consciences convict us of guilt, and our thoughts allow us no

* John i. 9.—"That person to whom John the Baptist bare witness, was the real Author and Fountain of all true wisdom, the original discoverer of all the Divine knowledge, which men in former ages ever had, or shall have in those which are to come."—*Samuel Clarke.*

† 1 John iii. 21.

rest, in their constant accusation one of the other; God is "greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things;" and it is He who now "distributeth sorrows in his anger."

v...Men, we know, are differently constituted, varying, in the manifestation of the qualities and faculties of their minds, as widely as in the forms and capacities of their physical frame. And it is an acknowledged fact, that some men appear to be born with a weaker faculty of discrimination between moral good and moral evil than others have by nature. There are some men, who seem "estranged from the womb," and to "go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies."*

But it is also an acknowledged fact, that each faculty of the understanding may be strengthened and improved by due cultivation, as it may, on the other hand, be weakened and corrupted by neglect.

And we know that the righteous Lord will require of us only in proportion as we have received from him; that Infinite Justice taketh not up that which it layed not down; and, that, Mercy reapeth not that which it did

* Psalm lviii. 3; and see Isaiah xlviii. 4—8.

not sow; but that unto whomsoever much is given, of him only shall be much required.*

VI...From what has been said, however, we may I presume conclude, that the sacred writings bear us out in maintaining the doctrine of a principle of conscience. And, assuming the existence of this principle, in which the bulk of mankind believe, and which a small minority, I trust, would fain deny, it requires little labour on our part to reach the obvious conclusion, that it is God who placed this principle within us; that it is He who guides its secret springs; that it is He who appoints its peaceful approvings, or its pain-bringing condemnations; that none other hand but the hand of God could have set up this "candle" of the mind; that, light proceedeth only out of light; that this light cometh down from the Father of lights,† to light every man that cometh into the world.

VII...But, there is another simple train of reflection, which it is presumed conducts us to the same conclusion, viz. that "justice and judgment belong unto God;" and it is this:—

* See Luke xix. Luke xii. 48. Gen. xviii. 25.

† See James i. 17.

Mark the results of different lines of conduct, and you will perceive, that, "as in the material, so in the moral world, we are presented with a regular succession of causes and effects;"* and that certain actions lead to advantageous, others to disadvantageous results.

You will observe that morally good actions lead to moral benefit, while bad actions surely tend to moral pain. In other words, that peace of mind is the reward of virtue, sorrow of mind the consequence of vice.

Pilate, without manifesting any great anxiety to have his question answered, demanded, "What is truth?"† To those who now ask, "what is virtue? and what is vice?" we reply only by referring them to the pages of the gospel.

"Wisdom," says Solomon, "crieth without: she uttereth her voice in the streets." "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."‡

Mark, then, the tendency of that course of life which the gospel condemns as criminal.

In the mind of the murderer, the thief, or of the adulterer; aye, the slanderer, the unkind, the liar, the intemperate, or of the

* See Appendix I.

† John xviii. 38.

‡ Prov. i. 20; xiv. 12.

flattered and caressed worshipper of mammon; see we no intimations of the truth of what more than once has been declared, that "there is NO PEACE to the WICKED?*

Is not the end and consequence of any line of conduct which deviates from that which is good and right, misery in some shape or other? Do not they who sow the wind, reap the storm? Where has ever been aught else the end of crime but woe? Does not the history of the world tell the same tale which the peasant's heart unfolds to-day,—there is no peace to the wicked.

Yes—let crime be wrapped in whatsoever garb it may; in the cloak of artifice, or in the robes of wealth: still—underneath is the worm that gnaweth, and the fire that burneth! Carried, perhaps, through banquets and gay scenes, where many are really gay: through the active paths of busy life, or the huts of poverty and want; still, there it is, the never-ceasing, the consuming pain!

What, then, is the truth? Are we to listen to the limping sophisms, which argue, that physical temperament and constitution, combining with exterior chances, are the sole conducive agents of man's weal or woe? That

* Isaiah lvii. 21.

moral conduct is of no importance, so long as those actions are concealed of which society disapproves, or affluence be at hand to bribe the world to wink at them?

What shall we say of those who to gather a few counters, sell lies to the ignorant and the miserable:—"MAKE EMPTY THE SOUL OF THE NEEDY, AND CAUSE THE DRINK OF THE THIRSTY TO FAIL?"*

Let the truth be told.—To endeavour to unite happiness with the practice of any single vice, is to endeavour to make that which is straight crooked, and that which is crooked straight;† it is to attempt to change the nature of the moral world.

Misery "is the *portion* of the wicked man."‡ "On *unknown* evil *grief* attends, and *joy* on *secret* good."

VIII...Doubt ye whence these things come? He who appoints the moon for certain seasons, and who makes the sun to know its going down; who rules above the storm, and guides the motion of the smallest creature that has life; "DISTRIBUTETH SORROWS

* See Appendix K. † Eccles. vii. 13.
‡ Job. xx.

flattered and caressed worshipper of mammon; see we no intimations of the truth of what more than once has been declared, that "there is NO PEACE to the WICKED?*

Is not the end and consequence of any line of conduct which deviates from that which is good and right, misery in some shape or other? Do not they who sow the wind, reap the storm? Where has ever been aught else the end of crime but woe? Does not the history of the world tell the same tale which the peasant's heart unfolds to-day,—there is no peace to the wicked.

Yes—let crime be wrapped in whatsoever garb it may; in the cloak of artifice, or in the robes of wealth: still—underneath is the worm that gnaweth, and the fire that burneth! Carried, perhaps, through banquets and gay scenes, where many are really gay: through the active paths of busy life, or the huts of poverty and want; still, t[illegible] is, the never-ceasing, the consuming [illegible]

What, then, is the t[illegible] e we to listen to the limping sophi[illegible] h argue, that physical temperamen[illegible] stitution, combining wi[illegible] ve the sole conduci[illegible] That

IN HIS ANGER" *—and makes any part of his creation instrumental to "correction" or to "mercy." †

"Evil is the portion of the wicked man from God, and the heritage appointed unto him." ‡

With rich, with poor—with high, with low! —for the WORLD's distinctions interfere not here; nor can the WORLD remove the sorrow of the wicked, any more than it can take away the happiness of the good! §

"The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord." ||

"The work of righteousness" is "*peace:*"

* Job xxi. 17. † See Job xxxvii. 13. ‡ Job xx.

§ "It's no in titles nor in rank,
It's no in wealth like Lon'on bank,
To purchase peace and rest.
It's no in making muckle mair;
It's no in books, its no in lear;
To make us truly blest:
If happiness ha'e not her seat
And centre in the breast,
We may be wise, or rich, or great,
But never can be blest:
Nae treasures nor pleasures
Could mak us happy lang;
The heart aye's the part aye,
That maks us right or wrang."

|| Psalm xxxvii. 23.

"and the *effect* of righteousness *quietness and assurance for ever.*" * AMEN.

THEREFORE—

HE THAT COMETH TO GOD MUST BELIEVE THAT HE IS, AND THAT HE IS THE REWARDER OF THEM THAT DILIGENTLY SEEK HIM.

* Is. xxxii. 17.

SERMON VI.

1 Cor. viii. 2.

" *If any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.*"

I...It is not strange, perhaps, that the maxim, or axiom, which is contained in these words, has not received the attention which its importance commands; that the truth itself is not generally perceived, or, at least, the perception of that truth very ill represented in the actions of men.

II...In the preceding verse, St. Paul says, " *Knowledge* puffeth up; but *charity* edifieth: or (to use the word nearest in our language to the expression of the apostle), *love* edifieth. That is, mere " *knowledge*" in any mind, not joined to, not accompanied with that which is the base of all virtue—the bond of all perfection—the principle of true religion—namely, love; mere knowledge, not joined

with this, puffeth up; but, when joined with this, (for it appears we should thus understand the passage), then it edifieth. And the whole passage, when we introduce that which the original language implies, runs thus:—

Knowledge, apart from the love of God, puffeth up: that is, tends only to engender PRIDE in him who possesses it; but knowledge, joined with that which St. Paul explains in another place, is "the fulfilling of the law," * which he calls "the bond of perfectness," † which St. John tells us is the very nature of God: ‡ KNOWLEDGE, joined with LOVE, EDIFIETH. But if any man thinks that he knoweth any thing, and has not this principle, he, surely, knoweth *nothing* yet as he ought to know. He is ignorant of that which it is most important for him to know, for the sake of his own welfare, and that of others. §

III...This appears to be the utmost *implied* meaning of the passage.

But, as the majority of those into whose hands the word of God is placed, have not the

* Rom. xiii. 8—10. † Col. iii. 14.

‡ 1 John iv. 8.—"He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love."

§ "Scire ut oportet." Est scientia uti ad suam, et aliorum salutem.—*Hardy.*

opportunity, or the leisure, of examining the comments which learning has made towards bringing to light the fullest scope of meaning to be attached to the expressions of those who wrote in the more ancient languages of the world; as all have neither the opportunity nor the need of doing this; it becomes important to explain the lessons given to us in the words of the inspired writers, as they stand in the translation of those writings which we possess: and while we set forth, to the best of our power, the fullest and widest interpretation, which a knowledge of ancient languages has brought upon the texts of Scripture; to give, at the same time, if possible, the plainest illustration of those lessons, as they have been left by the wisdom of the translators.

IV...From the words of my text, as they stand, the most important lesson may be drawn; they form an axiom, or rule, by themselves: which rule receives the fullest confirmation from other passages of Scripture: the truth of which rule is borne out, most simply and thoroughly, by our own reflections; and which, when proved, brings with it the immediate inference, implied in

the words of the text, as they stand in the original language, namely, that to have knowledge without charity, is to know nothing as we ought to know.

To consider then the words of the text: "If any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know."

"When I applied mine heart to know wisdom," says Solomon, "and to see the business that is done upon the earth:.....then I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: because, though a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea, farther; though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it." *

Similar to this has been the confession of all the wisest men who, at different periods, have graced the history of the world.

Similar to this has been the conclusion arrived at by the mightiest intellects which have ever been employed in the path of human inquiry.

It may appear strange to some, that *ignorance* should be the boon which *wise* men have attained unto.

* Eccles. viii.

It does seem strange to our earliest reflections on the subject, that ignorance, so absolute, should be the reward of those who, all their life, have toiled in their endeavour to rise above that very ignorance. For "there is," says Solomon, "that neither day nor night seeth sleep with his eyes!"

And it seems a paradox to early thoughts, that, after all, nothing is attained, but that which in the beginning was possessed—namely, IGNORANCE; nothing is arrived at by the WISE man, but the knowledge that he has not been able to find that which he has been seeking for. He has applied himself to the work of understanding the business that is done in the earth; he has laboured, but has not found it out: yea, although he has thought that he could find it, yet he has not been able!

"All that we know," said heathen philosophy, "is, that we know nothing:"* denoting the very limited portion of knowledge which the human mind, at that period of the world's history, was capable of arriving at.

What says christian philosophy?

I quote the words of one of the greatest, the wisest, and the most pious men, that ever laboured to enlighten and benefit mankind.

* Socrates.

" When," he says, " I wrote my treatise about our system, I had an eye upon such principles as might work with considerate men for the belief of a Deity; and nothing can rejoice me more, than to find it useful for that purpose. But, if I have done the public any service this way, it is due to nothing but industry and patient thought."*

" I know not," he said, " what the world will think of my labours,"—these are the words which you are entreated to notice:— " I know not what the world will think of my labours; but, to myself, it seems that I have been but as a child playing on the sea-shore: now finding some pebble rather more polished; and now some shell more agreeably variegated; while the immense ocean of truth extended itself unexplored before me."

The reason of my quoting these words to you is, that I wish to explain to you how it is that those who have attained unto most knowledge, are able to confess in this way how extremely little they know.

I have repeated to you the words of Solomon to this effect; the words, also, of one of the most celebrated of the ancient heathens, eminent for his virtue as for his research; and

* Newton's Works, Horsley's Edit. vol. iv. p. 430.

the words of the pious christian philosopher which I have just read.

And I think you will perceive, in your reflections on this subject, the very important way in which it unites itself with the other branches of christian meditation.

v...History, and the world around us, are the two sources of human knowledge. "If," it was said long ago, "if we have any humility towards the Creator; if we have any reverence and esteem of His works; if we have any charity towards man, or any desire of relieving man's miseries and necessities; if we have any love for natural truths, any aversion to darkness, and any desire of purifying the understanding; mankind are to be most affectionately entreated and beseeched to lay aside, at least for awhile, their preposterous, fantastic, and hypothetical philosophies, (which have led experience captive, and childishly triumphed over the works of God,) and now, at length, condescend, with due submission and veneration, to approach and peruse the volume of the creation, dwell some time upon it; and bringing to the work a mind well purged of opinions, idols, and false notions, converse familiarly therein.

"This volume is the language which is gone out to all the ends of the earth, unaffected by the confusion of Babel.

"This is the language that men should thoroughly learn: and not disdain to have its alphabet perpetually in their hands.

"And, in the interpretation of this language, they should spare no pains, but strenuously proceed, persevere, and dwell upon it to the last." *

This is the book which "he who runs may read." This is one source of knowledge: history is the other. But one of these sources alone is *boundless!* Look at the extent of the two, and what is our inference?

VI...The sources of knowledge being boundless; any portion of knowledge attainable by man, must, in proportion with these sources, not only appear, but *be*, indefinitely small.

Let us make use of a simple illustration. A drop of water taken from the sea, is very small in comparison to the sea from whence it is taken. So, the knowledge which man is able to attain unto, is much smaller, in comparison with the sources from whence he derives it; in comparison with the great

* Bacon on Method of Philosophy.

"OCEAN of truth," which extends itself, unexplored, before him.

VII...Now, mark the next step, which we arrive at in our reflections.

"They that go down to the sea in ships," says the Psalmist, "and occupy their business in the great waters: these men see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep." That is—they who have witnessed those parts of God's works which most immediately and forcibly, perhaps, overawe the human mind; these men are more likely to be impressed with the idea of the greatness of God and of his power, than those who move only in nature's calmer scenes; it being the vast and the terrible in nature which the more readily makes man conscious of his insignificance.

Pain, rather than pleasure, brings men to religion. Man, from what is every day before his eyes, from any page or line in nature's volume, may trace the greatness and the power of God as plainly and distinctly as when it is forced upon his discernment by such a spectacle as the ocean during a storm. Nevertheless, we see that it is not the case that he does so; but that sorrows and afflictions—storms and dangers—cleanse most the

atmosphere of man's understanding, and lead to calm contemplation, and the knowledge of God.

So, from the "blindness" of his nature, man is not so likely to be impressed with the idea of his own insignificance, and the consciousness of the little he is able to *know*, until the vast, and may we not add, the awful prospect of the "Ocean of Truth," has been contemplated as it extends itself before him.

It is he who has gazed upon that expanse—who has pored upon the "volume of the creation"—who has wooed truth with his whole being:—it is he who can understand the confessions of Solomon; who can see *how* all that we know is—that we know nothing—why they who may be said to have attained the greatest knowledge have ever been the foremost to avow their ignorance; and how it is that, "If any man think that he knoweth ANY THING, he knoweth NOTHING yet as he ought to know."

To conclude—and I entreat you to notice and endeavour to remember this:—If the wisest of men have ever acknowledged *their* ignorance: if modesty, humility, and love to all mankind, be the inseparable characteristics of the highest wisdom: how much ought

we to labour to put on that spirit, without which, our world-sung doings profit us nothing!*"—we, who have nought wherewith to crest and plume ourselves; nought to authorize our censures, or usher on our cruelties —but IGNORANCE—EXTREME!†

* "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." 1 Cor. xiii. 1—3.

† For if the wisest of men know comparatively nothing, they who possess less knowledge know comparatively less than nothing. See Appendix L.

SERMON VII.

1 Cor. xiii. 12.

"*Now we see through a glass darkly.*"

1...By comparing the sources of human knowledge with the means we have of attaining knowledge, we form an idea sufficiently definite to draw the greatest practical inferences from it, relative to the proportion which human knowledge bears to the sources from whence it is derived.

Having, then, for the purpose of arriving at practical inferences, drawn such a comparison, let us consider what is the first conclusion we come to.

It is this:—that, entertaining a belief in the existence of a Supreme Being, an all-wise, all-powerful, and benevolent God, the creator and preserver of all things, "the invisible things of whom, from the creation of the world, have been clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead." Entertaining a rational

conviction on this fundamental point; observing, and being fully conscious at the same time of the depravity of human nature; and being persuaded of the reasonableness of seeking the remedy for that depravity from God; knowing also that "he that cometh to God must" not only "believe that he is," but must also entertain conviction that God will reward "those who diligently seek him." Having, by patient induction, arrived at these earliest conclusions in our religious reflections; and, on the ground of these conclusions, having resolved to seek after God* with all our hearts, and all our minds, all our souls, and all our strength. The following is a most important inference, which we draw from our reflections on the nature and the extent of human knowledge:—

That, as we so hardly guess aright of things which are upon earth, and with so much labour find out THE THINGS WHICH ARE BEFORE US; how little probability is there of our being able to "SEARCH OUT" the things that are in heaven!"†

* See Acts xvii. 27.

† The sense of man resembles the sun, which opens and reveals the terrestrial globe, but conceals the stars: hence men fall who seek to fly up to the secrets of the Deity by the waxen wings of the senses.

II... And, therefore, when the tidings reach us that God has provided a remedy for our moral corruption:—

That there is a book, by Him caused to have been written, for the purpose of declaring to man the means prepared in the counsels of his Maker whereby man may be restored from his misery and depravity:—That the reception of this word of God is by God required, ere that word can be available towards man's salvation; *i. e.* that the belief of what God has declared, is by Him made a requisite qualification for man's experience of his peculiar mercy:—When we hear it pronounced that Almighty God pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy gospel:—

We are in possession of a most important induction, which we draw from former conclusions, viz. that we cannot reasonably expect that Almighty God, in a dispensation new to us, [as not having yet applied ourselves to the due contemplation of it,] should assume a new law in His providence: and remove every limit from our intellectual sight.

It appears that we could not, in reason, entertain this expectation.

That which we observe is universally existent, we conclude is the effect of an universal law.

When, therefore, we find all nature and all history proclaiming, with united voice, that the business of man, in this life, is to be ignorant and humble: we conclude that this is the will of Almighty God.

And we do not expect that this law will be changed; because we know that with Him who made that law, "there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."*

When, therefore, we listen to the tidings, which say, that God "established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, that men might set their hope in him, and not forget his works, and keep his commandments;"† when we hear, that God "hath showed his work unto Jacob, and his statutes unto Israel;"‡ when we hear of the "Scripture of TRUTH,"§ and of the WORDS which, though heaven and earth shall pass away, are not to pass away;||

And that it is repentance, and faith, in the

* James i. 17. † See Psalm lxxviii.
‡ See Psalm cxlvii. and Deut. iv. 8.
§ Dan. x. 21. || Mark xiii. 31.

Scripture of truth, by which we may have the promise of the life that now is, and of a life which is to come;—

When we HEAR these tidings, and on the ground of the probability that an all-wise and merciful God would in some way make known to man, that which it is of all things most important for him to know; —when, on this ground, we determine to engage every faculty we possess in the undertaking the examination of the Book, which purports to be the "SCRIPTURE OF TRUTH;"—

Entering upon this determination, and bearing in recollection, clearly, what have been our conclusions respecting the nature of the faculties which we are about to employ, and the extent of their capacity;—it seems, that we must expect that the knowledge which Almighty God may grant to us on one subject, will be so far similar to that which we are allowed to attain on another, that it will be found to be limited to the limits of our faculties; that it will be adapted to our situation, and fitted to the purposes for which it was intended.

We shall consider, that if we shall be permitted to arrive at reasons for a belief in

more than the mere existence of One "that judgeth the earth;"—if we should ever gain conviction respecting a future state after death, information respecting the nature of that state, and its duration;—if we should ever arrive at a more definite knowledge of the will of God respecting our conduct here, than by nature we can attain unto, of the origin of our moral depravity, and the means of remedying it;—if, on such subjects, light should be granted to us, through the medium of a revelation, in any mode conveyed; we expect, that that revelation, that light, would be fitted to our vision: a light not to dazzle, but to guide us; adapted to its purposes, as the light of other knowledge given us by our Maker; suited to its ends, as the lights in the firmament of heaven, to rule the day or the night.

III... When, therefore, man undertakes to "search" the "Scripture of Truth," man must call to mind for what end that Scripture purports to have been sent; with what design it is declared that God, the ruler and disposer of all things, caused it to be written:

Namely, to give light to them that sit in DARKNESS, and in the shadow of death; and to

guide their feet in the way of peace;"*—" to be a lantern unto our feet, and a light unto our paths."†

Remember, therefore, that as the knowledge of earthly things which we are permitted to attain, amounts only to that portion which is of utility to us in this life; and, moreover, that this is to be gleaned, without suspension of the curse—" in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread:" so we cannot expect that our knowledge of heavenly things, of things beyond the earth, when aspired unto in watching and prayer, will be found to exceed that portion designed to be our light in this dark world:—A light for us who sit in darkness, prepared to guide our feet in the way of peace, and to lead us on to everlasting life.‡

* Luke i. 79. † Psalm cxix. 105.

‡ " Well, and with good right therefore do we maintain (and with more zeal than we should defend body or estate,) a deep and inward conviction, which is as a *moon* to us; and like the moon, with all its massy and deceptive gleams, it yet lights us on our way (poor travellers as we are, and benighted pilgrims.) With all its spots and changes, and temporary eclipses; with all its vain haloes and bedimming vapours; it yet reflects the light that *is* to rise upon us, which even now is *rising*, though intercepted from our immediate view by the mountains that enclose and frown over the whole of our mortal life."—*Coleridge.*

" Difficulty is one of the conditions of imperfect knowledge."

IV..." We see through a glass darkly," says St. Paul.

The materials used by the ancients in place of the glass now in use among us, were by no means so clear as is the glass which we make use of; so that objects seen through them, or reflected by them, were but dimly and indistinctly perceived.

St. Paul, therefore, speaking of the knowledge or perception of heavenly things which is imparted to us by the gospel, takes opportunity to represent the nature of this knowledge by using this figure or comparison; by comparing our present perception of divine things to the perception of the nature of objects when reflected by or seen through a dim and darkened glass.

" We know," he says, " in PART.... When that which is PERFECT is come, then that which is in PART shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child. But when I became a man, I put away childish things. Now we see through a glass darkly; but then, face to face." In another life, that is, we shall see these things clearly and distinctly; then we shall know even as we are known.

The expression of the original language in

which the apostle wrote, is perhaps even more forcible;* signifying the nature of man's knowledge of things beyond the earth; IMPRESSING upon us the fact that we are not to EXPECT in this state to "know as we are known;" teaching us that we should continually remember how "man walketh in a vain shadow!" that the glad tidings of redemption through Christ confirm lessons of wisdom which have been from old time, that, here "all is vanity."† That, man, that is born of a woman, is of few days, coming forth like a flower, to be cut down; that he fleeth like a shadow.‡ That the dust, of which we are formed, will soon return to the earth from whence it came, and our spirit unto the God who gave it.§

That "the conclusion of the whole matter" is, that, "if any man think that he KNOWETH ANY THING, he knoweth NOTHING yet as he ought to know."||

And, that except we ACT under the cherished consciousness that we are but as ignorant

* "Βλέπομεν γὰρ ἄρτι δι' ἐσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγματι."
"Ἐν pro διὰ," says Hardy, "ex idiotismo Hebræorum, *i. e.* per figuras adumbrantes, obscure et difficulter."

† Eccles. xii. 8.
‡ Job xiv. 1, 2.
§ Eccles. xii. 13.
|| 1 Cor. viii. 2.

children here, we shall "in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."*

v... Reflection will lead men to the conviction, that, humility, mercy, and resignation to the will of God, must be our duty here. Continued† thought will tell us why we should in this life "speak" as children, "understand" as children, and "think" as children, in order that a time may come when we may be enabled to "put away childish things."

vi... Therefore, when we enter upon the determination of perusing the volume which announces itself to us as the sacred Scripture of God's truth, let us bear in mind all that we

* Luke xviii. 17.

† "It is an assured truth, and a conclusion of experience, that a little, or superficial, knowledge of philosophy may incline the mind of man to atheism, but a farther proceeding therein doth bring the mind back again to religion; for in the entrance of philosophy, when the second causes, which are next unto the senses, do offer themselves to the mind of man, if it dwell and stay there, it may induce some oblivion of the highest cause; but when man passeth on farther, and seeth the dependence of causes, and the works of Providence, then, according to the allegory of the poets, he will easily believe that the highest link of nature's chain must needs be tied to the foot of Jupiter's chair." See Appendix M.

have been able to learn from meditation, from research, and from inquiry; and with the soul prepared for "audience to be held with the King of kings," know, that, as without the light which God hath set in the firmament of the physical world, earthly objects cannot by the natural eye be seen; so, without light, which can only proceed from light, spiritual things will not be seen.*

Of God, the Father Almighty, we must seek for light; for *that* light, which is for us "who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet in the way of peace."

"We preach unto you that ye should turn unto the living God, which made heaven and earth, the sea, and all things that are therein."

* See Ellis on Div. Rev. p. 130.

SERMON VIII.

PROV. II. 3, 4, 5.

"*If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.*"

I...YOU will recollect, probably, the conclusions we arrived at, from our contemplation of the limited nature of man's capacity and attainment, as regards the subject of KNOWLEDGE.

Now, let us suppose any one to make use of such conclusions; and, with his mind DULY PREPARED, to set forth earnestly, quietly, humbly, and freely, as possible,* upon the task of searching the Scriptures of Truth.

Not assuming the Bible to be what it purports to be; but, on the contrary, undertaking

* See Appendix N.

the work of *searching the Scriptures* daily, to see whether the things which the christian ministry preach be so.

" The Bereans," St. Luke writes, " were more *noble* than those of Thessalonica; in that they received the word, with all readiness of mind, AND SEARCHED THE SCRIPTURES DAILY, TO SEE WHETHER THESE THINGS WERE SO."*

When man " crieth after knowledge, and lifts up his voice for understanding; seeks the TRUTH as silver, and searcheth for her as for hidden treasures;"—when, laying aside, to the utmost of his power, all prejudices and opinions, received on the credit of those whose ingenuousness may not be certain,—he prays to God for assistance to enable him to perceive that portion of his truth which, in his mercy, he may grant to benighted man; when—with humility, and honesty, and prayer—man searches the Scriptures:—what does he find? He is seeking the truth; and he finds it *written*—" God will have ALL men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the *truth*."† " The *way* of the truth shall be evil spoken of."‡ But, said Christ to the Jews, who believed in him, " If ye continue in my word.....ye shall

* Acts xvii. 11. † 1 Tim. ii. 4. ‡ 2 Pet. ii. 2.

know the TRUTH; and the TRUTH shall make you FREE."....." Ye shall be FREE INDEED."*

In another place, speaking to his disciples, he says, " Let not your heart be troubled! Ye believe in God; believe also in me." " I am the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE: no man COMETH UNTO THE FATHER BUT BY ME."† " Every one that is of the truth, heareth my voice."‡

When, therefore, man searches the Scriptures, what does he find?

II...He finds that which he needed.—He finds the full, complete, and perfect remedy for the moral corruption with which he has been born; the full means of restoration from all his depravity and misery!

It is not possible, by language, to convey an idea of the nature, the extent, or the value of that treasure which man discovers, as it were, hidden in a field, when he FINDS that which the " Scripture of Truth" contains for him.

" Eye hath not seen," it is written, " nor hath ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which

* John viii. 31, 32, 36. † John xiv. 6.

‡ John xviii. 37.—" Qui partes ejus fovet."—*Hardy.*

God has prepared for those that love him."* Similarly can he, who has "tasted the good word of God,"† say unto him who is "without,"‡—that, eye hath not seen, nor hath ear heard, nor hath it entered into any, but the Christian's heart, to conceive the happiness which God has prepared for man in this life, if man will not turn his face from the source whence all good things must come.

In saying that, by the "SCRIPTURE OF TRUTH," all our need is supplied, all our want satisfied, and all our sorrow removed, we only verify the observation to which I have just endeavoured to direct your attention, viz. that human words cannot describe the Christian's treasure.§

III...The "peace which passeth all understanding," is something which the powers of the understanding will never find language to portray; and, therefore, to know that peace, we must *experience* it. And all which remains to be said, in reply to those who may "marvel," or who would fain gainsay this doctrine, is summed up in the words of our blessed Lord himself—"My doctrine is not

* See Is. lxiv. 1 Cor. ii. 9. † Heb. vi. 5.
‡ Mark iv. 11. Rev. xxii. 15. § See Luke xvii. 20.

mine, but his that sent me! If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of GOD, or whether I speak of myself!"*

IV...Although, however, it is not in the power of language to convey any idea of the blessings which he attains unto whose "delight is in the law of the Lord;" yet, enough can be told and proclaimed to fulfil the object of the christian ministry, namely, that of *calling men to the light of the gospel,* and so bringing them to the service of Him who "MADE HEAVEN AND EARTH, THE SEA, AND ALL THINGS THAT ARE THEREIN."

V...The great doctrine, which is the foundation of our faith—the rock on which our hope must be set—the design of Infinite Mercy, from whence all our present real happiness must flow, and every hope of happiness to come, is — the ATONEMENT OF OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR—the great truth, CHRIST CRUCIFIED.

This doctrine, we read, was to the Jews of old a STUMBLING-BLOCK; and to the Greeks, FOOLISHNESS! But the Alpha and Omega—the beginning and the end of christian preaching—is, that we should go into all the world,

* John vii. 16, 17.

and preach to every creature redemption through Christ: that we should cry aloud to all mankind the great truth revealed in the glad tidings of the Scriptures, that "God so LOVED the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, to the end that *all* that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

We read in the Scriptures, that "God created man in his own image; in the image of God created he him."* But, "by one man *sin* entered into the world, and *death* by sin; and so *death passed upon all men.*"† That "man is born," therefore, "to *trouble*, as the sparks fly upwards."‡

No sooner, however, do we read the account of the sin which descended, in its effects, on all the children of men, than we read, that, God said, "The Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head."§ And then, in a series of prophetic declarations, the coming of One is continually, more or less distinctly alluded to, whose name was to be called the "Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace!"‖ And "when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman,"¶ "to

* Gen. i. 27. † Rom. v. 12. ‡ Job v. 7.
§ Gen. iii. 15. ‖ Isa. ix. 6. ¶ Gal. iv. 4.

be the propitiation for our sins!"* "The Word was made flesh," St. John writes, "and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."† God "made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."‡ HE "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, *zealous* of good works."§ God "now commandeth all men, every where to repent; because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained." "Man, of the substance of his mother, born in the world: God of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds." Of the which day of judgment he "has given unto all men ASSURANCE, in that he hath raised HIM from the dead."|| For Christ having risen from the dead, "he has become the first-fruits of them that slept."¶ "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."**

* 1 John iv. 10.
† John i. 14.
‡ 2 Cor. v. 21.
§ Titus ii. 14.
|| Acts xvii. 30, 31.
¶ 1 Cor. xv. 20.
** 1 Cor. xv. 22.

And the hour is coming, when the dead "shall hear his voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."*

Good and evil are so accurately and manifestly distinguished in the christian Scriptures, —the ways of pleasantness and the paths of peace† are so plainly shown by the Sun of Righteousness, that nothing but the darkness of iniquity's self-delusion can ever obscure them from the sight.

The great PRINCIPLE of man's duty towards God and his neighbour is so SET FORTH, with all the *branches* of duty which flow from that principle so fully, minutely, and precisely pointed out, that "woe," indeed, MUST be "unto them," who, with such a light shining round about them,—such a code of laws ever open before them,—can "call evil good, and good evil; put darkness for light, and light for darkness; bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter."‡

"God is LOVE," says the "Scripture of Truth;" "and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him."§ "Love is the fulfilling of the law."||

* John v. 28, 29. † Prov. iii. 17. ‡ Isa. v. 20.
§ 1 John iv. 16. || Rom. xiii. 10.

When the Pharisee, which was a lawyer, asks our Lord the question—"Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first great commandment: and the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."*

So, "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Love is the principle whence all our duties spring. "We love God, because he first loved us."† And "If God so loved us," that he "sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him;" "if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another."‡

But, on account of the infirmity of our nature, we are unable to do those things which we would do; and as we read, "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other."§ "The spirit, indeed, is willing, but the flesh is weak."

St. Paul says, "to *will* is present with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find

* Matt. xxii. 37—40.
† 1 John iv. 19.
‡ 1 John iv. 9, 11.
§ Gal. v. 17.

not: for the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do!" "Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" "I thank God," then, he says, "THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD."* "Walk in the *Spirit*," he says, "and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."† "They that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."‡ "I will pray the FATHER," said Christ, in comforting his disciples; "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another *Comforter*, that he may abide with you for *ever;* even the *Spirit* of *Truth*."§ "When the Spirit of Truth is come, he will GUIDE YOU INTO ALL TRUTH."‖ And "the Spirit," it is written, "helpeth our infirmities."¶ The Holy Spirit of God, "the Lord and giver of life," will bring unto the fountain of truth all those who seek it with "an honest and good heart,"** and cause that which they drink from that fountain to be in them "a well of water, springing up into everlasting life!"††

Christ, who has "entered into heaven,"‡‡

* See Rom. vii.
† Gal. v. 16.
‡ Gal. v. 24.
§ John xiv. 16, 17.
‖ John xvi. 13.
¶ Rom. viii. 26.
** Luke viii. 15.
†† See John iv. 14.
‡‡ Heb. ix. 24.

we read, "ever liveth to make intercession" for all those who "come unto God by Him,"* and "is able to save to the uttermost ALL that come." "Let him that is *athirst*," it is written, "*come*; and *whosoever* will, let him take the water of life *freely*."† "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to EVERY ONE that believeth."‡ And for his merits by faith, "which worketh by love,"§ man is JUSTIFIED.

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that *love* him."‖ But EVIL "is the *portion* of the wicked man from God, and the heritage appointed unto him."¶

Such is a faint outline of the leading principles of the christian faith.

VI...With respect to the idea of man's attaining a full and perfect comprehension of all pertaining to the doctrines of the christian revelation: let man remember the axiom with which reason sets out on the path of religious

* Heb. vii. 25.
† Rev. xxii. 17.
‡ Rom. x. 4.
§ Gal. v. 6.
‖ 1 Cor. ii. 9.
¶ Job xx. 29.

meditation and inquiry, viz. that it is the will of Almighty God, that human knowledge should be fitted to human life.

He, who "shut up the sea with doors," saying, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; here shall thy proud waves be stayed;"* He hath set also, "by a perpetual decree," "a bound" to man's understanding, "which man's understanding cannot pass;" and though the thoughts of the proud toss themselves, as the waves of the sea, "yet can they not prevail;" "though they roar, yet they cannot pass over it."†

He, therefore, who would search the Scripture of truth, let him bring to that search, as he would for his help in any course of inquiry, the knowledge which he at present possesses. Let him consider, as far as his superlative ignorance will permit, what *kind* of knowledge he is of opinion he stands in need of, *i. e.* as concerning his Maker, and his own future destiny;—what *portion* would be sufficient for, or adapted to him;—how much information on the subject of his anxiety *should* make him contented, thankful, and happy.

* Job xxxviii. 8, 11.

† Jer. v. 22.

By such mode of procedure, which surely is rational,* man is more likely to arrive at further convictions, mighty to lead him towards the assured hope of everlasting life, than one who would more proudly lay such considerations aside.†

Setting out with the mature consciousness, of *how* "the thoughts of mortal men are miserable, and their devices uncertain;" how "the corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things;" knowing how "hardly we GUESS aright at things that are upon earth, and with" (how much) "labour we find the things that are before us,"—man, with God's blessing, will be better able to perceive how, although the knowledge attainable through Christ in the gospel be such as is symbolized by St. Paul's figurative

* Although, possibly, not as some may understand the term.

† "What think ye? A certain man had two sons: and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you."

expression, "we see through a glass darkly;" yet, that that knowledge, that portion of truth, to them who possess it even in the least degree, is "a MARVELLOUS LIGHT!"*—a light, indeed, "*great*" "to them that walked in darkness, and dwelt in the land of the shadow of death;"† "the SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WITH HEALING IN HIS WINGS,"‡ "to those eyes which see its salvation."§ "The DAY-SPRING from on high," "to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide their feet in the way of peace."||

VII...It is light of such a nature, that they who seek to shun it, clothe themselves with the leprous shame of this condemnation, that "light *is* come into the world, but that they love darkness rather than the light, BECAUSE THEIR DEEDS ARE EVIL."¶

* 1 Pet. ii. 9.
† See Isa. ix. 2.
‡ Mal. iv. 2.
§ Luke ii. 30.
|| Luke i. 78, 79.
¶ John iii. 19.

SERMON IX.

JOHN VII. 14—17.

"*Now about the midst of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple and taught. And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.*"

1...IN considering the variety of opinion in religious matters which prevails in the present day, any person, whatever his education may have been, supposing him to be beginning, strict inquiry and reflection, on the subject of his religious opinions [which inquiry and reflection unfortunately with many is much neglected and postponed,] supposing him, at an advanced period of manhood, to commence seeking for himself CONVICTIONS on the subject, which convictions had not been supplied to him before, either by his own attention, or by

the care of his parents;—any person, it appears, in this situation, would be sensible of some perplexity, while he contemplated the wilderness of religious divisions, in which the minds of mankind at present exhibit themselves. He would see, it is true, the verification of those words [should those words ever have engaged his thoughts] which the Founder of our religion made use of, in forewarning his apostles who were to preach his doctrines after him, of events which would in future take place, where he said, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth!—I came, not to send peace—but a SWORD! For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's foes shall be they of his own household." *

But, supposing the religious sentiments of the inquirer not to be well founded; supposing him to be ill prepared to meet such contemplations as the above, which in fact we have assumed in the outset of these remarks; then would he of necessity feel a somewhat painful and possibly disheartening impression from the prospect open before him.

* Matt. x. 34—36.

He would probably ask himself,—whither, as I now stand, am I to direct my intellectual sight, that I may discern as heretofore the mercy and the goodness of Him who "never left himself without witness: in that he did good: and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with joy and gladness."*

"The invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, have been clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead."† His boundless goodness has been plainly discerned from the things which he has made; and "his mercies" have been seen "over all his works."‡

Is there no source, we naturally inquire, where we may gain a reply to the aspiration of our hearts? What is the truth? Whence may we know that which is pure and holy from the "cunningly devised fable?"§ "for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light."‖ Has not the God of all goodness provided here, as elsewhere, that his goodness be made plain, in that in this strait, as in all

* Acts xiv. 17.
† Rom. i. 20.
‡ Psalm cxlv. 9.
§ 2 Pet. i. 16.
‖ 2 Cor. xi. 14.

dangers and temptations, "the Lord preserveth the simple?"*

We naturally ask,—how, without learning, and without opportunity to learn, is the humble mind to discover, out of all the different religious beliefs which have existed, or which do exist in the world; how is the untutored mind, or even the understanding aided by letters, to be enabled to discern, which is, or which ever has been the teaching of God's truth?

II...And we are prone to forget for a moment, perhaps, that impartial justice, with which there can be "no respect of persons," confers its blessings upon all;—that God, therefore, will have made the knowledge of his truth, which is as necessary to the welfare of the untaught savage as to the world's monarch, open to ALL, independent of all human device, or attainment: "high as the heaven,"† above every worldly contingency.

III...However, it cannot fail of being plain to every man, that the business of reason is with the evidence of the truth, and not with the ultimate reasons and causes of what the

* Psalm cxvi. 6. † Psalm ciii. 11.

truth, when discovered, may offer for our contemplation.* To search daily for the truth; to seek her, as silver and hidden treasures; is the high privilege and province of human reason: but, in humility, to worship and to cherish the truth where found, is reason's highest province,—reason can advance no further.

IV...Let reason, then, be first employed in the seeking out and examining the evidences of the truth; and in the examination of the evidences of the christian religion, let reason be daily, hourly, busy. For, as has been before suggested, since perhaps there never was a time when the full understanding of those evidences was more imperiously demanded than it is now, by the numbers of those who oppose themselves, both openly and in secret, it becomes the more requisite that every Christian should be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh

* "They never had reflected," says the Abbé Barruel, speaking of the writers before the French revolution, that the whole question of these rights of reason turned simply on this: to know whether God had spoken or not; and to believe and silently adore whatever might be the nature of the truths he had revealed."—*Memoirs of Jacobinism*, vol. ii. p. 4.

for a reason of the hope which is in him, with meekness and fear; and, that, to those that are wandering "without," the great evidence of the gospel should be widely and loudly proclaimed; that they may understand and know how "God will have ALL men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth;"* that He is not willing that any should perish, but that ALL should come to repentance;"† that his ways be made known unto all sorts and conditions of men; that all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics, may be fetched home to God's peaceful fold; that all who profess and call themselves Christians may be brought into the way of truth; that through the means which Almighty God has appointed, His will be done.‡

v...To them that are "without," therefore, and who in sorrow are gazing upon the "darkness and thick gloominess" of our divided times; let the lamp be held forth: the truth which Christ declared set up on high, that all men may see it and come to its guiding, its healing light; that "if any man will do the will of God, he shall know of the christian

* 1 Tim. ii. 4. † 2 Pet. iii. 9. ‡ See Appendix O.

doctrines, "whether they be of God, or whether they be of man!"

"Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do His WILL, he shall *know* of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."

In these few simple words is given to us a rule adapted to the nature and circumstances of all mankind, whether they be high or low, or rich or poor, as regards their state in this life unto which it has pleased God to call them;—a rule, by which every man is enabled to undertake the work which shall qualify him for manifesting his strict obedience to St. Peter's injunction, viz. that of being "ready, always, to give an answer to every man that asketh him a reason for the hope which is in him."

VI...That a portion of the knowledge of the will of God has always been attainable by man, however much that portion of knowledge may have been obscured by wickedness or the frailty of man, was the subject of our former considerations:—"He that cometh to God," St. Paul tells us, "must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

The apostle also tells us that the wrath of the Almighty was revealed against the Gentiles, because they held the TRUTH in unrighteousness; and then what is meant by the truth, St. Paul explains by adding, "That which may be known of God is MANIFEST in them; for God hath showed it unto them."*

As we know, then, that man is endued with a capacity for discerning, to a certain extent, the line of distinction between moral good and moral evil—between virtue and vice:—

The question which next suggests itself is this,—What tidings do those men bring to us, who, in obedience to Christ's exhortation, *have* endeavoured to do the will of God, according to the light which they have received?†

You know the answer to this question. "We do," perhaps some would say; "but all that we hear we do not always believe."

I answer,—Nor has any one wished or proposed that you should.

"We do not believe," perhaps you would add, "those who bear witness of themselves."

* Rom. i. 19.

† "Qui partes veritatis foverunt." Verbum veritas id significat quod est.—"That which is *true* only *is*, and the rest *is* not at all."—See Isaiah v. 20.

Again, I answer,—Neither have you been asked to do so.

VII...The address which Christianity makes to an insane and miserable world, is this:—

"Come unto me all that travail and are heavy laden, and I will give you REST! Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly of heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."*

"I seek not mine own will," says Christ, "but the will of the Father who has sent me. If I bear witness of myself, my witness *is not* true."

I ask not to be believed on such evidence. But, "there is another that beareth witness of me; and I KNOW that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true."† "If any man will do the will of God, he shall know of my doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."

The gospel invites men, entreats men, COMMANDS men to examine, and search for themselves. It calls upon all men to employ the faculties which God has given them, soberly and earnestly, and as is befitting to

* Matt. xi. 28—30. † John v. 30—32.

such an inquiry, to see whether the things we preach be so.

We say, therefore, "Search the Scriptures!"* search them "daily," that ye who "have tasted of the heavenly gift"† may be able to answer the fool according to his folly, "lest he be wise in his own conceit."‡

That they who are without may be "brought into the way of truth;" that they may "speak" that truth to others; that they may tell their children; and that those children may tell theirs, and that they may tell other generations,§ how the Lord has "visited and redeemed his people;" "that we, being delivered from our enemies, might serve him without fear;" that "the Day-spring from on high has visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet in the way of peace." ||

We say, "*Search* the Scriptures:" and meditate on the simple lesson which those Scriptures teach the meek and lowly; that "Whoso putteth his trust in the Lord, HAPPY IS HE."¶— "Ponder"** on the great truth which all nature "crieth,"†† viz.—"Behold, the fear of

* John v. 39. † Heb. vi. 4. ‡ Prov. xxvi. 5.
§ Joel i. 3. || See Luke i. 68. ¶ Prov. xvi. 20.
** See Psalm cvii. 43. †† See Prov. i. 20.

the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding."*

VIII..." Wisdom crieth without, she uttereth her voice in the streets, saying, How long ye simple ones will ye love simplicity; and the scorners delight in their scorning; and fools hate knowledge?"

The prophet Jeremiah, in denouncing the judgments of the Almighty against Jehoiakim, king of Judah, says, " Shalt thou reign because thou closest thyself in cedar? Did not thy father do judgment and justice? then it was well with him! He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him! Was not this to know me, saith the Lord?"†

BRING FORTH YOUR STRONG REASONS.

" Blessed is the man," saith the Psalmist, " who has not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners."—" The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous."‡ " The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him."§ " The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord;"|| He is his

* Job xxviiii. 28. † Jer. xxii. 16.
‡ Psalm i. 1, 7. § See Psalm xxv. 14.
|| Psalm xxxvii. 23.

"strength in the time of trouble;"* and "the end of that man is peace."†

"Say ye to the righteous," it is written, "that it shall be well with him;" he "shall eat the fruit of his doings."‡

And if we look over the world, and observe, with earnestness of thought, that which is presented to our constant view, and draw our conclusions cautiously, and as free from the influence of natural inclinations and prejudices as we can; is not the light, afforded by the inevitable results of different modes of conduct, as the light of the sun, to shew the great outlines of human duty; a light, shining about the path of all "the sons of man,"§ to lead them in the way of righteousness, and in the midst of the paths of judgment?‖

What possible inference can reason draw from the contemplation of the never failing restlessness and sorrows of vice, and the peace, which is "the effect of righteousness;" but that God, who is "over all blessed for ever,"¶ is the disposer of these things?**

* Psalm xxxvii. 39. † Psalm xxxvii. 37.
‡ Isaiah iii. 10. § Prov. viii. 4.
‖ Prov. viii. 20. ¶ Rom. ix. 5.
** See Job ix. 24.

BRING FORTH YOUR STRONG REASONS.

It *is* He who disposeth all things; it *is* He who doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth."* The same Almighty power which rules over the winds and the seas;† which causes the sun to shine "on the evil and on the good;"‡ which feeds the fowls of the air; which clothes the lilies, and the grass of the field.§ That same power is He, who makes happy the good, and, in his anger, "distributeth sorrows"|| around the bad.

IX...In the outset of our reflections, we arrived at the conclusion that the "God over all" must be a God of goodness; we conceive that all goodness must proceed from Him; and we speak good of his name; and we read that "every good gift *is* from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."¶

When, therefore, we see that the spirit of man's mind, when man seeks after the knowledge of God as silver, and searches for

* Dan. iv. 35. † Job xxviii. 25; Mark iv. 41.
‡ Matt. v. 45. § Matt. vi. 28.
|| Job xxi. 17. ¶ James i. 17.

that knowledge as for hidden treasures; when we see the spirit* of man's mind CHANGING; when we see the subtle life of human understanding undergoing a total restoration or conversion; when, perhaps, we notice one who, beneath the pressure of life's common load, was lately sinking weary, vexed "about many things," joyless, hopeless, exhausted; when we observe such an one "turning unto God," and from a patient, unprejudiced, and earnest search and contemplation of a certain volume, receiving a persuasion of far more than earthly power—a conviction far mightier than e'er was one of earthly strength; that that volume can only be the written word of Him who ruleth over all! When we see that the inquirer, who adheres to the great, the just, although the simple rule which that volume holds forth, invariably and without exception, be he learned or unlearned, high or low, rich or poor, of whatever land, nation, or clime, always believeth that that volume is of God,—always believeth in JESUS CHRIST "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world,"†—approaches unto Him who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all things that are therein:—

* See Eph. iv. 23. † John i. 29.

When we see the understanding gradually "*renewed*;" the soul raised above all earthly troubles; healed by an unseen hand; borne up beyond the reach of circumstance and pain, upon the wings which virtue brings to thought; when age receives a second youth, spiritual life a second birth,—when "old things are passed away, and all things are become new:"*—

Who is there who will not kneel to contemplations such as these?

The mind of man *is* bowed to earth, before these simple truths, as a reed before the wind; though stiff impiety, in devilish pride, may hold the knee unbent.

x...Infidelity,† the thin cloak of crime, cannot conceal even its own shame: the shame which is lighted up for the world's gaze and disgust, by the brightness which emanates from the truth which we contemplate, as we watch how our God is the "rewarder of them that diligently seek him." — How it is that he who crieth after knowledge, and lifteth up his voice

* See 2 Cor. v. 17.

† "Where is the wisdom of attacking a religion whose essence is to enforce every virtue, and to condemn every vice?"—See *Memoirs of Jacobinism*, vol. i. p. 362. See Appendix P.

for understanding,—seeketh her as silver, and searches for her as for hidden treasures,—*understands* the fear of the Lord, and *finds* the knowledge of God.

XI...It would be prudent in him who sets up his horn against the hope of christian men to reflect on one particular declaration made in the volume which is the object of his jest, or the aim of his spite:—

"There is a sin unto death:"*—a sin, "which will not be forgiven, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."†

Let him compare the joyous hope and peace of christian faith with the powerless wretchedness of unbelief, and ask himself this question;—Has not the latter the *appearance* of being what the former professes itself *to be*, the earnest of that which is to come?

Does not the insanity in which unbelief to such an extent remains, compared with the approximate soundness of mind, so characteristic of the true Christian, look like a testimony as to the source of the denunciation against the sin which shall not be forgiven? Has this no appearance of a verification of the words—"I am the light of the world: he

* 1 John v. 16. † Matt. xii. 32.

that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."*—"If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins."†

Has not the state of the "adversaries"‡ mind the semblance of the shadow of eternal death? Has not the sweet peace of christian life the appearance of reward?

XII...Let us conclude. Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. All things which we can desire are not to be compared to her. "Her ways are ways of pleasantness: and all her paths are peace."§

She "crieth without," alas! "she uttereth her voice in the streets:"—"she standeth at the top of high places, calling unto the sons of man: saying, Blessed are they that keep my ways: blessed is the man that heareth me."—"Whoso findeth me findeth life:" "but he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me, *love death!*"||

Ponder, then, my brethren, o'er nature's volume—search the Scripture of truth!

* John viii. 12. † John viii. 24.
‡ See Heb. x. 27; Acts viii. 23.
§ See Prov. iii. 13. || Prov. viii.

"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work!—There is neither speech nor language: but their voices are heard among them! Their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world."*

"Ask of the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee! Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee:"† the same truth which the voice of thine own spirit‡ is ever whispering to thee, namely, "in whose hand is the soul of every living thing:"§ who it is "that judgeth the earth;"|| who it is who rewards those "who diligently seek him."

The Scripture of truth confirms the inductions we make from our contemplations of the natural world: reveals all that is needful for weak and sinful man to know: and is "able to make us wise unto salvation, through faith which is in CHRIST JESUS."¶

Therefore, for our creation, for our preservation, and all the blessings of this life, we bless and praise the Father of all mercies!

* Psalm xix. 1.
† Job xii. 7, 8.
‡ See Psalm cxxxix. 14.
§ Job xii. 10.
|| Psalm lviii. 11.
¶ 2 Tim. iii. 15.

But, above all, we bless Almighty God for his inestimable love, in the REDEMPTION OF THE WORLD, BY OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory!

SERMON X.

PSALM XCV. 8.

"If ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

I...WE are taught, in the Scriptures, that as a woman seeks to find a piece of money which she has lost; or, as a shepherd follows one of his flock which has gone astray; so Almighty God follows the wanderers from his fold.

"He is the Lord our God," says the Psalmist, "and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

"What man of you," said Christ to the Pharisees and the scribes, who murmured against him because he sat down to eat with sinners; "what man of you having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh

home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.*

In the nineteenth chapter of the first Book of Kings, we read, when the Lord spake with his prophet Elijah, "Behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice."

* Luke xv.

This is the voice to which the Psalmist listened, as he sung—"Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee. I will praise thee, O God: for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well."*

* Psalm cxxxix.

Whose heart is there which does not echo to the truth of these words?—

Whose voice is it which has whispered to every man, "Behold! the fear of the Lord—that is wisdom: and to depart from evil is understanding." * Whose voice is it, which, directing the counsels of the wise, preserving the simple, admonishing the careless, terrifying the wicked, following the wanderer o'er land and sea, is "heard through gain's silence and o'er glory's din;" above all the confusion of active life, by the thief at his midnight works, or by the sot and the sensualist in his morning recollections,—"thoughts accusing one another?"†

It is the voice, which follows the sheep which are astray; it is the voice of Him, from whom cometh every good gift; it is the light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world; it is the spirit, which proclaims the reward of the righteous;—it is the God which judgeth the earth!

II...The same voice is *written* in the "Scripture of truth," to which they who listen have "peace," but they who do not listen—"no peace,"—their sky is overcast, their day is a

* Job xxviii. 28. † See Appendix Q.

day of darkness and thick gloominess; they have turned from the light of life, and they walk in the shadow of death.

III...The history of the world, perhaps, does not furnish us with a more awfully complete representation of the gradual hardening of the human heart, than in the person of the celebrated oppressor of Egypt, whose signal and terrific overthrow is recorded by Moses, in the fourteenth chapter of the Book of Exodus.

IV...All history, it is true, and all experience, teaches that when men persist in following the ignorant devices and noxious desires of their own hearts; when they persevere in their refusal to listen to Him who is about their path, and about their bed, spying out all their ways, and calling them, unceasingly, to quit the service of evil, and to come unto him; entreating them, with gentle influences, and admonishing them, with timely warnings, to return into the ways of peace:—

When men "harden" their hearts against their Maker's voice—"the Lord is *far* from the wicked!"* And this truth, so fearfully illustrated in the account of the king of

* Prov. xv. 29.

Egypt, receives testimony from the results of our own every-day observation. We observe the degrees of moral apostasy, and the mandates of darkness are written in the deeds of some men.

v...But the account of Pharaoh appears to have been designed, in the dispensations of Providence, to take a *peculiarly* conspicuous place in the history of mankind. "In very deed," the Lord said, it is written, "for this cause have I raised thee up, to show in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth."*

Almighty God, at any moment, might have brought to nothing the king of Egypt and his people. But he "raised them up," we read, to the end, that his name might be declared throughout all the earth—his mercy and long-suffering, and his wisdom, at the same time—in reserving them for such destruction.

vi...After the death of Joseph, we read that the Pharaoh, or king, who protected and promoted Joseph, died; and that there arose up another king over Egypt, who knew not Joseph, and who it was, who began the perse-

* Exod. ix. 16.

cutions of God's chosen people. This was not the king to whom we have been alluding, but the one who preceded him. He, however, observing that the Hebrews increased considerably in number, "said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: —

"Come on, let us deal wisely with them: lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land.

"Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses.

"But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were *grieved* because of the children of Israel." *

You must observe, that, with the iniquities

* Exod. i.—"The fear entertained by Pharaoh, lest the Israelites should 'get them up out of the land,' was a reasonable apprehension: for Egypt was, in every age, subject to the incursions of that fierce and barbarous people, the Arabians, on that very side which the Israelites inhabited: who, possessing their own district, unmixed with the Egyptians, had the keys of the country in their hands, to admit or exclude an invader at pleasure."—*Bp. Warburton.*

of Pharaoh and his people, performed against the Israelites, God's warnings begin; and, in addition to the inward reproof of conscience, which must have accompanied the high criminality of their proceedings against the Hebrews, the open intervention of Providence called upon them to desist. But they were only "grieved because of the children of Israel,"—they only lamented and were perplexed because their evil devices were baffled.

The king then commanded that the male children of the Hebrews should be destroyed. But, we read, "the midwives feared God, and did not as the king commanded, but saved the men children alive; therefore God dealt well with the midwives, and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty."

The prosperity of the midwives was another demonstration, which God, in his mercy, held forth to the Egyptians, of their conduct being directly opposed to his will.

Now Pharaoh, however, "charged his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive."

"And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi.

And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink. And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him. And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river;* and her maidens walked along by the river's side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children. Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother. And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy

* According to the custom of the country.

wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it. And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water."*

Moses, being the adopted son of the Egyptian princess, received an education correspondent with his rank; and he was instructed, we are told, "in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," and he was "learned" and "mighty in words and deeds."†

"And when he was forty years old, it *came into his heart* to visit his brethren, the children of Israel." And he did so; ‡ and having avenged the cause of one of his afflicted brethren, he drew upon himself the anger of Pharaoh, and was obliged to fly for safety

* "Here we see an amazing concurrence of circumstances; and those of great moment and highly interesting, which could not be the effect of chance. They were certainly brought about by that Divine Wisdom, which can influence our hearts and order our goings, and make us subservient to the will of God; which often makes use of a series and evolution of events, simple in themselves, and obvious, but *wonderful in their texture and combination, towards the accomplishment of his high decrees.*"—*Bryant.*

† Acts vii. 22.

‡ See Heb. xi. 24—26.

into the land of Midian; and there he dwelt." *

"It came to pass now," we read, "that the king of Egypt died, and the children of Israel sighed by reason of their bondage; and they cried, and their cry came unto God, by reason of their bondage."

Another king, who even exceeded the former in wickedness, had ascended the Egyptian throne. Four hundred years had elapsed, since the promise was made to Israel of the inheritance of the land of Canaan; and now, in this fittest season, in this fulness of time, which the Almighty had "put in his own power,"†—Moses is summoned to be the deliverer of the people. I have seen, said the Lord to Moses, the affliction of my people, and I have heard their cry; and I am come to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians; and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring them forth. But I am sure that he will *not* let you go—no, not by a mighty hand. And I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders,‡ which I

* Exod. ii. 21.

† Acts i. 7.

‡ "All of which had reference to the idolatry of the people."—*Bryant.*

will do in the midst thereof; and after that he *will* let you go.*

In obedience to God's command, Moses went forth with Aaron to the king; whose reply to the divine mission was, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice, to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go."† And Pharaoh commanded, the same day, the task-work of the Israelites to be *increased;* and the officers of the children of Israel came and besought the king, but were treated only with cruelty and scorn.

The Lord, then, again sent his messengers, vested with miraculous power, unto Pharaoh. But his heart was still hardened, and he hearkened not unto them, as the Lord had said.‡

* See Exod. iii....."God foresees all the actions of men, both those which are conformable to his will, and those which are not; but the fact of his foreseeing them does not affect the free agency of man."

† Exod. v. 2. See Gen. xii. 17.

‡ Exod. vii. 13.....This verse has been incorrectly translated. It should be, "the heart of Pharaoh was hardened," and not, "he hardened Pharaoh's heart."—"The original is so rendered by all the ancient versions, without exception, and by the most judicious modern translations."—*Dr. Hales.*

We are not told that the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart until ver. 9, ch. xii.—"When nations or individuals," says

The waters of the river Nile—the waters of the idolized river of Egypt—were then turned into blood! And the fish that were in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river: and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt!

But Pharaoh's heart was hardened, neither did he hearken unto Moses and Aaron, as the Lord had said!

At the coming of another judgment, the king, we are told, began to repent; but at the removal of the plague by the prayer of Moses, again Pharaoh turned to his impenitence and wickedness, and again defied the Holy One of Israel.

More judgments came! Another, and another terrible infliction! And the king clung to his sins!*

But, not until after his resistance of even another yet more awful warning—not until then, was it that the Lord accomplished his

the learned author, whose words have just been cited, "despise the warnings of Heaven, abuse their best gifts, and resist the means of grace, 'God then delivers them over to a *reprobate* or undiscerning mind, to work all uncleanness with greediness.'"—Rom. i. 28; Eph. iv. 19.

* "Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin, as it were, with a cart-rope."

word, and hardened the heart of Pharaoh, as he had spoken unto Moses.*

The inward voice of conscience in vain had whispered. The outward inflictions of plague and pestilence had descended round about the impenitent man in vain. Still he pursued his course.

Almighty God is JUST, as well as merciful. "Justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne; mercy and truth go before his face."†

The voice, so long unheeded, now died away. Light, granted but avoided, was now made to recede. Darkness, so long wooed, now became a bride. And sure it was, that, until the destroying angel came to smite with death, Pharaoh would not let the people go.

More plagues came, and the king the more resisted. And no sooner had he been URGED, by the *slaughter of the first-born,* to dismiss the people; than, in demoniacal frenzy,‡ he exclaimed, "Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us? And he made ready his chariots, and took his people with him; and he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and

* Exod. ix. 12. † Psalm lxxxix. 14.
‡ 1 Sam. xvi. 14.

captains over every one of them; and he pursued after the children of Israel."

The Israelites passed through the midst of the sea, upon dry ground. But, it came to pass, in the morning watch, that the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians, and troubled the host of the Egyptians.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen. And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them. *And Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore: and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and his servant Moses!*"*

Such is the history of Pharaoh:—affording a singularly conspicuous and notable instance, as has been before remarked, in the history of

* Exod. xiv. See Appendix R.

the world, of the consequence of turning from the voice of God.

VII...Man is surrounded with temptations to evil. We feel that we are surrounded with temptation, which if, with God's help, we do not resist, will overcome us; the power of evil will have dominion over us; the ruler of the darkness of this world will bind us in his chains. "Be sober," says St. Peter, "be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour." *

If we cease to listen to the voice of God; if we refuse to obey Him; if, deserting his paths of peace, we persist in disobedience against Him; he gradually withdraws himself from us; he leaves the "house" of our souls;—and the "adversary," the "destroyer," who is ever on the watch, finding that house "empty, swept, and garnished," † enters in and dwells there!

VIII...The sentence of eternal justice, which went forth over Egypt, may be seen now, alas! thickening as a cloud over individuals or multitudes; and they who have eyes to see

* 1 Pet. v. 8. † Matt. xii. 44.

or ears to hear, can know how God is "THE SAME YESTERDAY, TO-DAY, AND FOR EVER!" *

He, whose "mercy is over all his works," is "kind to the unthankful and the evil;" †—He "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." ‡

IX...This we see.

Nature's bounty is open to the wicked as well as to the good.

But what else can we discern?

The good ENJOY her bounty; the wicked do NOT!

The wicked man may be surrounded with all this world can give: but the *capacity* for enjoying life's blessings is not with him; the *sense* of happiness is injured.

It matters not, in the least degree, whether want or wealth be the DRESS of the soul's earthly tabernacle in this scene of life. If God be far from our spirit, then mirth is not there; hope is not there; joy is not there! Darkness and sorrow form the soul's atmosphere—the shadow of that darkness to which there will be no limit, and wherein there will be weeping only, and gnashing of teeth!

* Heb. xiii. 8. † Luke vi. 35, 36. ‡ Matt. v. 45.

X...If there be one whom I now address, who hath "walked in the counsel of the ungodly, stood in the way of sinners, or sat in the seat of the scornful," let him know that "the way of the ungodly SHALL PERISH!" Look to the fate of *others:* — remember PHARAOH!

Destruction and evil; seas of destruction, whose waves and tides the Lord disposes at his will, are round about us wheresoever we be!

But—"THE LORD OF HOSTS IS WITH US; THE GOD OF JACOB IS OUR REFUGE."* "If ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

* Psalm xlvi. 11

SERMON XI.

MARK IV. 39.

"*He arose and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace; be still, and the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.*"

I...HAVING, on former occasions, endeavoured to bring to your minds the *way* in which the voice of God comes to us; and, having represented, in my last discourse, the result of hardening the heart against that voice; I am anxious, this evening, to call your attention to the opposite subject, of the consequence of listening to that voice.

I have selected for my text the words of St. Mark, where he describes the circumstance of our Lord's stilling the tempest, the connexion of which subject of reflection with the one immediately under our consideration, I

trust will be plain to you, and I think is important.

The circumstance, you recollect, as related by the writers of the gospel history, was briefly this:—

Our Lord, having embarked with his disciples, in a ship, on the lake of Gennesareth, there came on a storm, and the ship was covered with the waves. Jesus, we are told, was asleep the while "in the hinder part of the ship." And his disciples, greatly frightened at the fury of the storm, "came to him, and awoke him," saying, "Master, Master, we perish. And Jesus arose and rebuked the wind; and said unto the sea, Peace, be still; and the wind ceased, and there was a great calm."

II...Now, there are words of God coming to us, through the mouth of his prophet, which are these:—

"I, the high and lofty One, who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is HOLY, I dwell with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit! I revive the spirit of the humble," the good, and just.

But the wicked are like the troubled sea, where it cannot rest, whose waters cast up

mire and dirt. "There is no peace to the wicked!"* There *is* no peace; there can be no peace, our own hearts say, to the wicked.

All history, all time, all experience, all observation, tells the same truth: "There is no peace to the wicked!" they are like the troubled sea, lashed by unseen winds — stirred by unseen power—driven to and fro, so that they *cannot rest.* Darkness above—darkness all around—darkness within—storm and darkness, the unchanging aspect in which their spirits move.

III ... Now, "All," it is written, "have sinned;" all like sheep have gone astray; all like sheep, more or less, do go astray. And St. John tells us, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."†

There were "angels who kept not their first estate!" Man kept not his. And in the sins and the follies, the crimes and the sorrows, which darken the history of all people; in the vices—the imprudences—the MADNESS, of every one of us now; we see that,

* See Isaiah lvii. † 1 John i. 8, 9. See parallel passages.

which *without* the written word of God, there would be no way of accounting for; but which, for us possessing the Bible, points every day, every hour, and every moment, indeed, to the time when, "by one man, sin entered into the world," with all its consequences.

In every sorrow, in every perplexity, in every evil thought, in every deceit, in every "fallen countenance,"* in every tortuous tongue, we discern mementos of our condition sufficient to remind us of our fallen state.

All sin, more or less; vice is never entirely absent from us, how widely soever the degrees of vice vary in different characters. Perfection is not attainable by us in this our present state of existence.

While our proneness to evil exists, so long as this disease of our nature continues, which it does to the end of our lives, (we are born in sin; and, into sin, in this world, we are ever in danger of falling;) so long as this fact remains the same, sin will at times make inroads on the best of mankind, on those, *i. e.* who have attained the highest degrees of comparative excellence.

This being the case, this being the real

* See Gen. iv. 5.

truth, as it is written, and as the hearts of mankind can testify, there are, therefore, moments when the feelings of the very best of us are likely to vent themselves in some such expression as this, "Why art thou so cast down O my heart; why art thou so disquieted within me?"*

And thus, although, with thanks to God, we may not be tossed in the fearful and unimaginable hurricane into which daring impiety has borne the souls of some; still, transgressors as we all are in some degree, it cannot be otherwise, than we should at times feel the disquietude, as of troubled waters, though it be in proportion as the motion within a harbour to that out at sea, yet to an extent sufficient to remind us of the words of David, the "man after God's own heart."† "Deep calleth unto deep, with the voice of thy waters: thy waves and billows pass over my spirit."‡

When this is experienced, let us sympathize with David further, and "wait in confidence for God, for yet again shall we praise Him;" let us seek in prayer "his light and faithfulness;" and, as the stag thirsteth after the

* Psalm xlii. 5. See French and Skinner's Translation, London, 1830. † 1 Sam. xiii. 14. ‡ Ps. xlii. 7.

brooks of water, day and night, let us go in search of his peace,—let us seek relief at the waters of life.

IV..." Whosoever is athirst," saith the voice of God, "let him come, and drink of those waters freely."* "Whosoever labours and is heavy laden, let him come," saith Christ, "for I will give him rest."† "Strive to enter in at the strait gate." "Labour not for that meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto everlasting life."‡ "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and then all these things shall be added unto you."§

Such words as these should be sufficient to make us lift up our hearts, which are cast down; such words should be listened to; the voice which speaks those words, openly and in secret, should be regarded!

Almighty God comes unto his own, and his own reject him: but, as many as receive Him, to them he gives power to become his children; those who, believing in Him, keep his commandments, which are not grievous.

* Rev. xxii. 17. † Matt. xi. 28.
‡ John vi. 27. § Matt. vi. 33.

They receive a new birth,—they receive from God the sonship of God, and become his peculiar children.

"In the beginning," says St. John, "was the WORD, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. That was the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."*

Listen to the voice of God, and you receive his light. "When the wicked man," says the Prophet Ezekiel, "turns away from the wickedness which he has committed, and does that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul ALIVE."† But, "in HIM is LIFE, and that LIFE is the LIGHT of men." If you listen to, and obey the voice, you receive that LIGHT—which is the GLORY of God's people.‡ "I am the light of the world," said Christ; "he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."§

* See John i. † Ezek. xviii. 27.

‡ "The work of the Holy Spirit is manifest in the life of all true Christians. Lamps so heavenly must have been lighted from on high."—*Guesses at Truth*, vol. i. p. 66.

§ John viii. 12.

VI...The design of the sacred writings being to call men to this state of salvation; the word of God, in almost every page of those writings, exhorts man, either directly or indirectly, to listen to and to obey his Maker's voice; by *telling* man, that *when* he does listen to that voice he will have *peace*, and that he will NOT find peace except at the HAND OF GOD; for that *every* good gift cometh from Him.

It is scarcely necessary that I should cite any number of passages in proof of this; as, in all probability, they would fall familiar on the ear, without calling forth much additional stimulus to reflection. But, I wish you to dwell upon the idea which I have been anxious to impart, that there is a voice from above, continually calling to us—the voice which is written on the tablets of the heart—the voice which is written in the Scripture of truth—the voice of GOD, the Creator and Preserver of all mankind, which tells you, that to turn from God is misery, to listen to God is peace.

VII...He who laid the foundations of the earth, who covered it with the deep as with a garment; who sendeth the springs into the

rivers which run among the hills; who maketh the clouds his chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the wind; He at whose word the storm ariseth, and the waves of the sea are lifted up; and, again, who maketh the storm to cease, so that the waves thereof are still.

Is it a question with you, whether he *could* speak peace to the human mind, and infuse rest over the spirit of his creatures? "They that go down to the sea in ships, and occupy their business in the great waters: these men see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep."

Need we go forth to see his wonders? Is not all one boundless wonder? and each infinitesimal portion equally wonderful? And can we suppose that He who, with marvellous unchanging laws, rules over his works,—can we suppose—have we any *reason* to suppose that He created the human mind, to be the one exception in his works; that unto this small portion of his creation his Providence does not extend—that over the human mind there is no law? Hath He set no bounds thereto which are not to be passed? Cannot the wind and storm come forth to fulfil his word there also? and can He not say to those waves,—"Peace—be still?" Ask your own

selves that question; for there is a voice within which will answer,—the world without will answer that question; all history, all time, and all experience answers that question. God Almighty does say to the spirit of him who will listen to his still small voice,—"Peace—be still!" He "stilleth the raging of the seas, and the MADNESS of his people."

VIII ... We all know, if not from experience, from observation or inquiry, that the yoke of God is the easiest, and his burden the lightest, we can bear, as surely as we know that there is no peace to the wicked.

We speak that of which we are certain, and testify that we have seen, which we have heard also with our ears, and which our fathers have declared to us; when we affirm, that, the eyes of the *Lord* are over the righteous, and his ears open to their prayers—that "whoso putteth his trust in God, HAPPY is he." *

This is a simple truth which, I believe, men of all opinions will assent to, a portion of knowledge which is placed before the eyes of all,—knowledge beyond price,—but which ALL may reap the advantage of. We speak that

* Prov. xvi. 20.

we do *know*, and bear witness to that which we have *seen*, when we *affirm* and *proclaim*, that "BLESSED are all they that fear the Lord, and walk in his ways." We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen, when we say that when he who has sinned, turns from his sins which he has committed, unto God; that, it is then he finds repose.

IX...And, I ask, whence does this repose come—this "peace which passeth all understanding," but from God? Can this repose primarily proceed from any other source? *Whence cometh it but from Him who is the author of every good gift?*

BRING FORTH YOUR STRONG REASONS.

"Every good gift," it is written, "cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." When he who has sinned turns from the error of his ways, wherein he experienced only continual sorrow, and finds, when he comes unto God in sincerity and truth, a "peace which passeth all understanding;" "a joy like that of childhood;" a principle which "overcomes the world:" then man knows that this, which the world could not give, comes from God.

He knows that such a change as has been made in him, COULD only have been made by Him who is above all principalities, and above all powers. The "God of the spirits of all flesh;"* "not the author of confusion, but of peace;"† whose name is LOVE,‡ who is a SPIRIT,§ "in whose hand is the SOUL of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind;"‖ and whose is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever.

The converted sinner KNOWS that He alone, who stilleth the raging of the seas, could thus becalm the madness of his people! Where, I ask, can we look forth on a sea so turbulent, so black, so tossed by tempests, so overhung with storm and darkness, as that troubled sea, described by the prophet—the mind of the wicked man?

And yet, when man "bethinketh himself,"¶ and repents,—when "the wicked forsakes his way, and the unrighteous his thoughts,"** —when man "quencheth no longer the Spirit,"†† "quits the far country,"‡‡ "and

* Numb. xxvii. 16; xvi. 22.
† 1 Cor. xiv. 33; Heb. xiii. 20.
‡ 1 John iv. 8, 16.
§ John iv. 24.
‖ Job xii. 10.
¶ See 1 Kings viii. 47.
** See Isa. lv. 7.
†† See 1 Thess. v. 19.
‡‡ See Luke xv.

comes to himself;" *—does not the cloud of his transgressions gradually pass away? Does not repentance make a dawn to spring over his troubled sea? Does not "the Spirit of GOD move upon the face of the waters,"† as the weeping morning of his new life quietly begins?

And, when we read of the miracles which our Saviour performed on earth for the establishment of his religion, can we not beneficially be recommended to bear in mind the miracle which, before our eyes, he performs, for OUR conviction, for our persuasion, for our conversion unto him, and that we may flee "for refuge, to lay hold on the hope which is thus SET BEFORE US:" ‡ while we see the wretched in FAITH comforted; the heavy-laden refreshed; the prisoners released; the blind receiving their sight; the lame walking; the lepers cleansed; the deaf hearing; the dead raised; and the "troubled sea" made calm: — as God, in his mercy, returns unto the man, who, in penitence and humility, returns unto him! §

* See Luke xv. † See Gen. i. 2. ‡ Heb. vi. 18.
§ See Zech. i. 3, 4. See Appendix S.

SERMON XII.

PSALM XCVI. 9.

" O, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."

WHATEVER be the exact meaning or purport of these words, at any rate they contain a most earnest exhortation to us, to worship God in a becoming manner,—to use such behaviour during our public devotion, as is due to the subject on which we are occupied, and the place which we are in. And, therefore, if there be any rules enacted by the church to which we belong, for the maintenance of order and suitable decorum in our public worship, surely those rules ought to be attended to and observed by those who profess to be members of that church.

When the church, for instance, has made it customary for those, who come to join in

her public service, to *kneel down* during parts of that service, or to *stand*, or to *sit*; persons who come to the church, for the purpose of joining in that service (which is supposed to be the object of those who do come) should comply with such rules.

If compliance of manner and corresponding and suitable decency of behaviour is readily observed at every common festival or meeting, where numbers have come together for any special purpose, is it too much to ask of men to be similarly complying, and willing to submit to similarly suitable regulations, when they meet to pray in the places set apart for the worship of their God?

If, again, parts of the Common Prayer of the church service ought necessarily to be *repeated by the congregation*, such as the General Confession at the beginning of the service, appointed to be said *by the whole congregation after the minister*; the Lord's Prayer, the verses after the Lord's Prayer, and so on;—it is extremely difficult to imagine what possibly can be the motive of persons who come to church, as I before said, professedly with the object of joining in the worship there, and then, when they are there, sullenly refusing to do so.

It is obvious that every society, of whatever nature it be, must have its rules and regulations, for the preservation of order, decency, quiet, and seemliness,—such as I before mentioned.

The Church of England is a SOCIETY. We, its members, meet here, to worship God in spirit and in truth! And the RULE which that society has laid down for the preservation of order and decorum during that service, I will just read to you before I say more.

"In the time of divine service, and of every part hereof, all due *reverence* is to be used; for it is according to the apostle's rule, 'Let all things be done decently, and according to order;' answerably to which decency and order, we judge these our directions following. All manner of persons present shall reverently kneel upon their knees, when the General Confession, Litany, and other prayers, are read; and shall stand up at the saying of the Belief, according to the rules in that behalf prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer: testifying, by these outward ceremonies, inward humility, christian resolution, and due acknowledgment, that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, is the only Saviour of the world; in whom alone all the promises of

God to mankind, in this life and the life to come, are fully and wholly comprised. None, either man, woman, or child—of what calling soever—shall be otherwise, at such times, busied in the church, than in quiet attendance to hear, mark, and understand that which is read, preached, or ministered: saying, in their due places, *audibly with the minister*, the Confession, the Lord's Prayer, and the Creed; and making such other answers to the public prayers, as are appointed in the Book of Common Prayer."*

And the churchwardens, moreover, are bound to see that *these rules be attended to*—to see that all persons who resort to the church behave themselves orderly, soberly, and reverently, kneeling at the prayers, standing at the Belief, and sitting or standing, quietly and attentively, at the reading of the Scriptures and the preaching of God's word.

But many of those who are present must, with me, have observed, that there are persons, at times, attendant at our church, who not only avoid joining in the responses appointed in the service, but who wear a manner betokening their having come to the

* See the Eighteenth Ecclesiastical Canon.

church, *without a thought respecting the service*, and merely because it is customary so to do: persons who wear the disaffected look which I mean,—who, during the reading of the prayers, join not in the prayers,—during the singing of the hymns of the church, join not in the singing of the hymns,* but stand looking about themselves, at the other persons assembled, appearing to have no thought, or wish, or hope, in the least degree connected with the professed object of the assembly:—I mean to say, that these persons, whether intentionally or not, it is not my business to say, have the appearance of persons who have come to the church, not for the purpose of joining in its worship, but for the purpose of avoiding any prejudicial notice being attached to them as stayers away.† They seem to have come here because it is considered "*respectable*"‡

* In which lack of the manifestation of such feelings as ought to be cherished by those who meet to worship in the temples of their God, they are shamed by the custom of almost every conventicle in the country.

† "A person who goes regularly to church," says a writer on domestic management, "will be well spoken of, though he may have no other merit to recommend him. He that neglects that duty, will be ill spoken of, if he has no other fault, and has every other virtue."—*Rev. H. G. Watkins's Hints to Heads of Families.*

‡ See Appendix T.

to come here; and not because of the promise, " Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them ; " not " with united hearts and affections," to offer up their prayers to God; not to make confession before him; not to pray for forgiveness; not to " rejoice in the strength of their salvation ; " not to " come before his presence with thanksgiving ; " not to " show themselves glad in him with psalms."

Now, I consider it of very little moment to descant upon the unprofitableness or the offence of such proceedings (in a religious point of view), or to endeavour to remind people of the obvious fact, that the earnest practice of the wildest superstition on earth must be a more acceptable offering to God, than such a " coming before his presence " as this. It is, I fear, needless to say that she who bathes herself in the idolized river, or he who throws himself before the wheels of a chariot, because he deems it duty to his God, performs better sacrifice than that to which allusion has been made: it appears needless to mention this, because the offering which persons make, who come to church actuated merely by the fear of incurring the censure of others, is an offering to the world,

not an offering to God. "Verily, they have their reward!" *

But I would place the subject in this light. In these times, when men represent themselves as so peculiarly independent, liberal-minded, and, as a matter of course, sincere—free to seek out their own opinions—free to maintain them—free to select their rule of faith—free to follow that rule when selected:—I say, it seems strange that, in such times, we should see any thing like that of which I have considered it my duty to speak. We might expect that, save in the history of the past, "the childhood of the world's thought," no such persons would be heard of as worshippers for custom's sake,—no such thing as religion for fashion,—no church-attending people for mere form's sake. We might expect that those who disregarded the church would not come to the church; that those who were not openly with her, would join those who are openly against her, and go elsewhere; that every party would be sifted of its formalists; and that, to compose or constitute each party, the earnest, the honest, the fixed, and the sincere, would alone remain; and that those who, by their appearance, used to manifest at

* Matt. vi. 2.

our churches that their heart was elsewhere, would now seek the place where their treasure was,—would select their own rules to follow, and would appear elsewhere, earnest at least in something.

This, however, is not the case, but exactly the reverse; and in these times, strange to say, more than ever it seems, in these times, when each man may seek unmolested his own opinion and his own creed; and out of the multiplicity of modes of worship, which confuse and confound the people, may follow that peculiar one which may be most suitable to his own conviction or fancy. Still, there appear to be people, who come to our churches as *if only to express their disapprobation or scorn of our mode of worship, and of our religion;* their heart, from their manner, seems to be elsewhere.

God forbid that I, or any one else, should set himself up to judge in any matter. There is ONE only to whom judgment belongs. All I feel called upon to say, but what I would distinctly say, is this, that there is not the *feeling represented* in the church, always, which one would wish to see.*

* "Men crave after a religion by proxy. How prevalent even now is the feeling, that the clergy are to do the

If there be a place where truth alone should actuate the hearts of men, it is truth's temple, the temple of God.

If "singleness of heart," honesty, and truth, should ever guide the converse of man with man,* — if woe be the portion of hypocrisy and deceit, exercised towards the humblest of our fellow-men,†—what will be the reply to the constant prayer, which goeth forth from "feigned lips?"‡

"With the Christian, the season of prayer is a season of delight, not of restraint; a time of refreshment, and not of weariness; he delights to be with God, to exclude the world from the hallowed hour of solemn seclusion, and, like Moses, to sit in high conference on the mount of prayer, and catch a prospect of that lovely land, where his steps are tending, and his heart has been long before." "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."§

Many there are who profess and call themselves Christians; but where is the evidence of

service of the temple, not *with* us, but *for* us; nay, that they alone, and not all in communion with them, are the Church."—*Hinds's Three Temples*, p. 124.

* Zech. viii. 16. † Matt. xxiv. 51.

‡ Psalm xvii. 1. § Matt. vi. 21.

their love towards God? — where is the evidence of their love towards man?

Graven images of wood and brass once commanded the devotion of high and low. These have been laid aside. MAMMON is the feared, and the beloved now, — MAMMON is the idol which, in the intellectual wilderness of our time, men have set up to worship; and God they cannot worship also. Happiness their wish, *gold their aim,* what is this but the judicial infatuation characteristic of our times?

Who is it that adopts wrong measures to attain his end? Who is it, who, to reach a certain point, takes a path leading directly in the opposite direction? Who is it who "reasons rightly, from false premises?" Who is the dreamer? who is the insane? who, but the proverb of misery, sitting among his heaps of gold?*

Look at your natural face in a glass,† and call not the pious man a dreamer!

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but

* "All the happiness he can conceive or wish, is contained in bags and barns. These are the sole points of his faith, and objects of his confidence."

† See James i. 23.

lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The light of the body is the eye: if, therefore, thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not

arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof.*

* Matt. vi.

APPENDIX.

A.—Sermon II. p. 11.

NECESSITY OF HAVING FOUNDATIONS TO OUR RELIGIOUS BELIEF.

"Occasions will arise to try the firmness of our most habitual opinions; and, upon these occasions, it is a matter of incalculable use to feel our foundation,—to find a support in argument for what we had taken up upon authority."—*Nat. Theol.* p. 352.

"I shall not, I believe, be contradicted when I say, that, if one train of thinking be more desirable than another, it is that which regards the phenomena of nature with a constant reference to a supreme intelligent Author. To have made this the ruling, the habitual sentiment of our minds, is to have laid the foundation of every thing which is religious. The world thenceforth becomes a temple, and life itself one continued act of adoration."—*Ibid.* p. 354.

support of the whole propelling force. At length we find one, who will not only explain the whole mechanism from first to last, but tell us of the nature of its materials, of the places whence they were derived, of the modes of their fabrication, of the manner in which they were put together, and of all the effects of their combined action. But it is not necessary to know all this, to be certain of an intelligent contriver. The first observer drew this conclusion rightly from what he saw, though he comprehended little of these complicated movements.

"The external forms of organic bodies we can study, their functions we can observe, their internal mechanism we can partly trace: but when we consider the vital powers connected with their origin and development, we find ourselves among phenomena out of the ken of our senses, and removed beyond our intellectual grasp; and are compelled to acknowledge our ignorance. *But, on this account, to exclude an intelligent contriver, would not be more wise, than for a man to assert the fortuitous concourse of the wheels of a machine, because he knew not the power by which it was set in motion.*" — *Sedgwick, on the Studies of the University of Cambridge.*

"Were it necessary to inquire," says Paley, "into the *motives* of men's opinions, I mean their motives separate from their arguments; I should almost suspect, that, because the proof of a Deity drawn from the constitution of nature is not only popular, but vulgar (which may arise from the cogency of the proof, and be indeed its highest recommendation), and because it

B.—Sermon II. p. 16.

CONTRIVANCE PROVES DESIGN.

"Contrivance proves design: in every organic being we survey (and how countless are the forms and functions of such beings!) we see a new instance of contrivance, and a new manifestation of an intelligent superintending power.

"This proof is so strong, that it never has been and never can be gainsaid. It is in vain that we attempt to shut out the belief in an intelligent Creator by referring all phenomena to a connected succession of material causes, not one of which is fully comprehended. This thought should, indeed, fill us with deep humility, but takes not from us the fair inductions of our reason. We do not understand that complicated material action, by which the God of nature builds up the organic structure of a sentient being; but we do, in part at least, comprehend the adaptation of its mechanism to various ends, and we see those ends accomplished: and this enough to warrant our conclusion.

"An uninstructed man sees a piece of mechanism, and from the form and the acting of its external parts (though he comprehend neither its whole structure nor its objects), is certain that it is the work of a skilful hand. Another man understands all its complicated movements, but knows not the nature of the moving power in which they originate. A third can explain the alternate expansions and condensations of an elastic vapour, and point out this action as the origin and

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But—"After all the schemes and struggles of a reluctant philosophy, the necessary resort is to a Deity. The marks of DESIGN are too strong to be gotten over. Design must have had a designer. That designer must have been a person. That person is GOD."

"When the atheist denies a God, if he have no notion at all what is meant by the word God, he denies he knows not what."—*Hancock.*

C.—SERMON II. p. 23.

GOODNESS OF GOD.

"WHEN God created the human species, either he wished their happiness, or he wished their misery, or he was indifferent and unconcerned about either.

"If he had wished our misery, he might have made sure of his purpose, by forming our senses to be so many sores and pains to us, as they are now instruments of gratification and enjoyment; or, by placing us amidst objects, so ill suited to our perceptions, as to have continually offended us, instead of ministering

to our refreshment and delight. He might have made, for example, every thing we tasted, bitter; every thing we saw, loathsome; every thing we touched, a sting; every smell, a stench; and every sound, a discord.

"If he had been indifferent about our happiness or misery, we must impute to our good fortune (as all design by this supposition is excluded) both the capacity of our senses to receive pleasure, and the supply of external objects fitted to produce it.

"But either of these, and still more, both of them, being too much to be attributed to accident, nothing remains but the first supposition, that God, when he created the human species, wished their happiness; and made for them the provision which he has made, with that view and for that purpose.

"The same argument may be proposed in different terms; *thus*:—Contrivance proves design; and the predominant tendency of the contrivance indicates the disposition of the designer. The world abounds with contrivances; and all the contrivances which we are acquainted with, are directed to beneficial purposes. Evil, no doubt, exists; but is never, that we can perceive, the *object* of contrivance. Teeth are contrived to eat, not to ache; their aching now and then is incidental to the contrivance—perhaps inseparable from it; or even, if you will, let it be called a defect in the contrivance: but it is not the object of it. This is a distinction which well deserves to be attended to. In describing implements of husbandry, you would hardly say of the sickle, that it is made to cut the reaper's hand; though, from the construction of the

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instrument, and the manner of using it, this mischief often follows. But, if you had occasion to describe instruments of torture or execution: this engine, you would say, is to extend the sinews; this, to dislocate the joints; this, to break the bones; this, to scorch the soles of the feet. Here pain and misery are the very objects of the contrivance. Now, nothing of this sort is to be found in the works of nature. We never discover a train of contrivance to bring about an evil purpose. No anatomist ever discovered a system of organization calculated to produce pain or disease; or, in explaining the parts of the human body, ever said, This is to irritate; this, to inflame; this duct is to convey the gravel to the kidneys; this gland to secrete the humour which forms the gout. If, by chance, he come at a part of which he knows not the use, the most he can say is, that it is useless: no one ever suspects that it is put there to incommode, to annoy, or to torment."—*Paley.*

D.—Sermon II. p. 26.

MORAL TRUTH.

Ἡ κάθαρσις κοιεῖ ἐν γνώσει τῶν ἀριστων εἶναι.

"Religion being the corner-stone and the key-stone of morality, must have a MORAL origin; so far, at least, that the evidence of its doctrines are not, like the truths of abstract science, wholly independent of the will.

" It were, therefore, to be expected, that its fundamental truth would be such as might be denied, though only by the FOOL; and, even by the fool, from the madness of the heart alone."—*Coleridge.*

" By natural consequence, every moral delinquency, and much more, every habitual desertion of moral rectitude, disturb the soundness and integrity of the mind, and produce an infatuation, approaching much nearer in degree to *insanity*, than the word infatuation, in common use, expresses.

" This *consequence* the heathen writers attributed to a judicial sentence of the gods; from whence the mimic poets borrowed the tragic frenzy of Orestes, and the burning torches of the Furies." — *Cobb. Bampton Lectures*, p. 57. 1783.

See Exod. ix. 12; 1 Sam. xvi. 14; Prov. i. 28; Isa. i. 15; vi. 9; Jer. xiv. 12, 10; Hos. v. 6; Mic. iii. 4; Matt. xii. 45; John xii. 39; Acts xxviii. 25; Rom. xi. 8; 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12; 2 Tim. i. 7; 2 Pet. i. 9.

" Before leaving the subject of Insanity," says Dr. Abercrombie, " there is a point of great interest, which may be briefly referred to. It bears, in a very striking manner, upon what may be called the pathology of the mental powers; but I presume not to touch upon it, except in the slightest manner. In the language of common life, we sometimes speak of a moral insanity, in which a man rushes headlong through a course of vice and crime, regardless of every moral restraint, of

instrument, and the manner of using it, this mischief often follows. But, if you had occasion to describe instruments of torture or execution: this engine, you would say, is to extend the sinews; this, to dislocate the joints; this, to break the bones; this, to scorch the soles of the feet. Here pain and misery are the very objects of the contrivance. Now, nothing of this sort is to be found in the works of nature. We never discover a train of contrivance to bring about an evil purpose. No anatomist ever discovered a system of organization calculated to produce pain or disease; or, in explaining the parts of the human body, ever said, This is to irritate; this, to inflame; this duct is to convey the gravel to the kidneys; this gland to secrete the humour which forms the gout. If, by chance, he come at a part of which he knows not the use, the most he can say is, that it is useless: no one ever suspects that it is put there to incommode, to annoy, or to torment."—*Paley.*

D.—Sermon II. p. 26.

MORAL TRUTH.

Ἡ κάθαρσις κοιεῖ ἐν γνώσει τῶν ἀριστων εἶναι.

"Religion being the corner-stone and the key-stone of morality, must have a moral origin; so far, at least, that the evidence of its doctrines are not, like the truths of abstract science, wholly independent of the will.

"It were, therefore, to be expected, that its fundamental truth would be such as might be denied, though only by the FOOL; and, even by the fool, from the madness of the heart alone."—*Coleridge.*

"By natural consequence, every moral delinquency, and much more, every habitual desertion of moral rectitude, disturb the soundness and integrity of the mind, and produce an infatuation, approaching much nearer in degree to *insanity*, than the word infatuation, in common use, expresses.

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every social tie, and of all consequences, whether more immediate or future. Yet, if we take the most melancholy instance of this kind that can be furnished by the history of human depravity, the individual may still be recognized, in regard to all physical relations, as a man of a sound mind; and he may be as well qualified as other men for the details of business, or even the investigations of science. He is correct in his judgment of all the physical relations of things; but, *in regard to their moral relations, every correct feeling appears to be obliterated.* If a man, then, may thus be correct in his judgment of all physical relations, while he is lost to every moral relation, we have strong ground for believing, that there is in his constitution a power, distinct from reason, but which holds the same sway over his moral powers, that reason does among his intellectual; and that the influence of this power may be weakened or lost, while reason remains unimpaired. *This is the moral principle, or the power of conscience.* It has been supposed by some to be a modification of reason, but the considerations now referred to appear to favour the opinion of their being distinct. That this power should so completely lose its sway, while reason remains unimpaired, is a point in the moral constitution of man which it does not belong to the physician to investigate. The fact is unquestionable;—the solution is to be sought for in the records of eternal truth."*

* Inquiries concerning the Intellectual Powers, and the Investigation of Truth, p. 364. See also "Philosophy of the Moral Feelings."

" Quem Jupiter vult perdere prius dementat."

Aristotle maintained that *pleasures* are corruptive of *principles* (*φθαρτικαι των αρχων.*)

Ωσπερ οφθαλμω λημωντι, και ου κεκαθαρμενω, τα σφοδρα φωτεινα ιδειν ουκ οιοντε· ουτω και τη ψυχη μη την αρετην κεκτημενη, το της αληθειας ενοπτρισασθαι καλλος.

As it is impossible for an eye, labouring under a malady which causes a defluxion, to see clearly any very bright and brilliant object, till the impurity is removed; so it is for the mind, unpossessed of virtue, to reflect the beautiful image of truth.—*Hierocles, in Præf. ad Pythag.*

" Si præceptor, HOMO, gravatur *homini* disciplinam humanam committere, puta dialecticam aut arithmeticam, somnolento, oscitanti, aut *crapulâ* gravato; quanto magis SAPIENTIA CÆLESTIS dedignabitur loqui voluptatum hujus mundi amore temulentis, cælestium rerum neglectu, nauseatibus?"

If a preceptor, a mere man, hesitates to give merely human instruction; for instance, lectures on logic or arithmetic, to a pupil who is drowsy, who yawns, or who is sick with the intemperance of yesterday; how much more will the heavenly Wisdom disdain to speak with those who are drunk with the pleasures of the world, and who, from a total neglect of heavenly things, sicken at the mention of them?—*Erasmus.**

* See Knox's Christian Philosophy, p. 114 of vol. vii. of Works. Lond. 1824.

may be fatal."—*Abercrombie, on the Intellectual Powers*, pp. 191, 460.

"When such beginnings are neglected," says Jeremy Taylor, "and our religion hath not in it so much philosophy as to think any thing evil as long as we can endure it, they grow up to ulcers and pestilential evils; they destroy the soul by their abode, who at their first entry might have been killed with the pressure of a little finger."

"I have sat upon the sea-shore and waited for its gradual approaches, and have seen its dancing waves and its white surf, and admired that he who measured it in his hand, had given to it such life and motion; and I have lingered till its gentle waters grew into mighty billows, and had well nigh swept me from my firmest footing. So have I seen a heedless youth gazing with a too curious spirit upon the sweet motions and gentle approaches of an inviting pleasure,* till it has detained his eye, and imprisoned his feet, and swelled upon his soul, and swept him to a swift destruction."—*A. M.*

[1 Cor. vi. 16.]

See "Treatise on Doubt in Religious Questions," Part ii. c. I.

"It is singular," says Novalis, "that the real ground of *cruelty* is lust." On which an interesting writer observes, "The truth of his remark flashed across me this morning, as I was looking into a bookseller's window, where I saw "Illustrations of the

* 2 Cor. xi. 14.

Passion of Love," standing between two volumes of a History of the French Revolution."—*Guesses at Truth*, i. 314.

See Rom. vii. 23; Gal. v. 17; Rev. xxii. 14, 15.

At the battle of Sedgmoor, a young maid interceded with Colonel Kirk for the life of her brother. Captivated by her beauty and innocence, he promised to grant her request, if she, in her turn, would be compliant to him. The maid yielded. After she had passed the night with him, he shewed her, from the window, her brother, for whom she had sacrificed her virtue, hanging on a gibbet.

There are some men who, Lord Bacon says, "in other men's calamities are, as it were, in season, and are ever on the loading part: not so good as the dogs that licked Lazarus' sores, but like flies that are still buzzing upon any thing that is raw; misanthropi, that make it their practice to bring men to the bough, and yet have never a tree for the purpose in their gardens, as Timon had."

See "Thoughts upon the Love of Excelling and the Love of Excellence," p. 150; "Fanaticism," p. 160; "Antilucrece," t. i. p. 164.

"They who blow in the dust will carry some away in their eyes."

Therefore, be WISE UNTO THAT WHICH IS GOOD, AND SIMPLE CONCERNING EVIL.

"Learn to be wise from other's harm,
And you shall do full well."

especially of such questions as the persons best authorized to propose are ever the slowest in proposing; and objections intelligible of themselves, the answers to which require the comprehension of a system. 8. Vague and common-place satire, stale as the wine in which flies were drowned last summer, seasoned by the sly tale and important anecdote of but yesterday, that came within the speaker's own knowledge! 9. Transitions from the audacious charge, not seldom of as signal impudence 'as any thing was ever carted for,' to the lie pregnant and interpretative: the former to prove the orator's courage, and that he is neither to be bought or frightened; the latter to flatter the sagacity of the audience. 10. Jerks of style from expressions in ostentation of superior rank and acquirements to buffoonery in pledge of heartiness and good fellowship. 11. Lastly, and throughout all, to leave a general impression of something striking, *something that is to come of it.* This is the pharmacopœia of political empirics, here and every where, now and at all times! These are the drugs administered, and the tricks played off by the mountebanks and zanies of patriotism; drugs that will continue to poison as long as irreligion secures a predisposition to their influence; and artifices, that like stratagems in war, are nevertheless successful for having succeeded a hundred times before. 'They bend their tongues as a bow: they shoot out deceits as arrows: they are prophets of the deceit of their own hearts: they cause the people to err by their dreams and their lightness: they make the people vain, they feed them with wormwood, they give them the water of gall for drink; and the

The blissful period of innocence too soon expired: certain women arrived from the country of the giants: and these, by their seductive blandishments, corrupted its pristine integrity and purity."*

"There can arise little doubt, but that, by the Satya age, or age of perfection, the Brahmins obscurely allude to the state of perfection and happiness enjoyed by man in paradise. It is impossible to explain what the Indian writers assert, concerning the universal purity of manners, and the luxurious and unbounded plenty prevailing in that primitive era, without this supposition."—*Maurice's Anc. Hist. of Hindostan*, vol. i. p. 371.

"In the classical story of the garden of the Hesperides, where the golden apples were guarded by a serpent which was slain by Hercules, we may discover an obscure tradition of the Mosaical paradise, and of the promised Saviour, who should bruise the head of the infernal dragon."—*Holden on the Fall of Man*, p. 278.

"There is reason to suppose," says Mr. Faber, "that the ancient Druids of the Celts expressly taught the defection of the human soul from a state of original rectitude."—*See Maurice's Ind. Antiq.* vol. vi. p. 53.

"The doctrine of man's deterioration by the fall, while yet a distant hope was held out to him of recovering his lost privileges, seems likewise to be very

* Edda, Fab. vii.

plainly alluded to in the well-known legend of Pandora.

"This highly-gifted female is said to have been formed from clay, synchronically with the similar creation of a man: and she is represented as being the mother of the first woman who was born in a state of liability to death. At the time of her production, she received presents from all the gods; and, among the rest, a beautiful casket from Jupiter, which he commanded her to bestow as a nuptial gift upon the man whom she should marry. Fatal curiosity led to the opening of the box; and from it issued forth all those evils, which have ever since afflicted mankind. Hope alone, the hope in a promised and long-remembered Deliverer, remained at the bottom of the casket."*

The degeneracy of the human soul is alike the standing complaint of the Stoics and the Platonists.

"Plato's mode of illustrating the aberration of the soul is singularly curious and striking. Originally it resembled a winged chariot, soaring aloft on golden pinions, and passing freely through heaven and earth: but, when for its sins it was thrust down and inclosed within the body, it lost its wings, and remained a prisoner in the flesh under the tyranny of unlawful passions. Hence the incarcerating body may well be deemed the sepulchre of the soul: hence our birth is a death: and hence, conversely, our death, which is in fact a liberation of the soul from its corporeal tomb, ought to be esteemed a birth into a new and better

* Hyg. Fab. 142. Fulgen. Mythol. lib. ii. c. 9. Hesiod. Oper. et Dier. lib. i. ver. 60—97.

state of existence. Agreeably to this opinion, which he professes to have received from certain wise men, he speaks of the bondage of the soul; and laments, as its worst misfortune, that it not only disregarded its captivity, but lent its own assistance to rivet the chain. He even asserts the doctrine of hereditary sin, which he probably learned from the same quarter. 'The cause of our wickedness,' says he, 'is derived from our parents and from the constitution of our nature, rather than from ourselves; so that we never relinquish those actions, by which we imitate the primitive fault of our earliest ancestors.'"—*Platon. Gorg.* 493.

These few passages, which, with the exception of one I quote from Mr. Faber's valuable work, his Horæ Mosaicæ, are merely to indicate the *sort* of allusion which ancient history abounds with, to the fall of man, as recorded by Moses.

And, as Mr. Holden remarks, the obvious conclusion at which we arrive, from the contemplation of these allusions, distinct and indistinct, but all to the same fact, is this, that "These traditions, existing among nations widely separated, and having no communication with the people of Israel, could not possibly be derived from the Jewish records; and yet they coincide with these records in too many particulars to admit the supposition of their being the invention of a creative fancy. A correspondency in so many circumstances, and some of them curious and extraordinary, as it could not be the effect of accident, must have originated from some common source, which can be conceived to be no other than the occurrence of actual

facts. Such an agreement, being impossible in fictitious narratives, can only have arisen from real events, the memory of which is in the one case accurately recorded, and in the other indistinctly preserved. The pagan traditions, however involved in fable, or loaded with absurdity, prove that the fact really took place, because, since they could not be derived from the Jewish annals, there is nothing else to which their origin can be ascribed. Hence they supply a twofold testimony, inasmuch as they establish the credibility of the Mosaic account of that fact, and confirm the literal interpretation, since they correspond with that interpretation, and no other."—*Holden on the Fall of Man*, p. 275.

Again—"The entire ritual of expiatory sacrifice must evidently be viewed, as founded upon a direct acknowledgment of human apostasy; for, unless an idea of lost integrity had pervaded the whole world, and unless the doctrine of such an aberration had been handed down from the most remote antiquity, it is impossible to account for the universal establishment and recognition of so very peculiar an ordinance.

"That the practice of devoting piacular victims has, at one period or another, prevailed in every quarter of the globe; and that it has been alike adopted, both by the most barbarous and by the most civilized nations; can scarcely be said to need a regular and formal proof. Whether we direct our inquiries to the frozen north, or to the sultry regions of the south; whether we mount upon the wings of the morning, and survey the mighty empires of the east, or accom-

pany the adventurous navigator of more modern times to the distant shores of the western world: the same religious notions, and the same expiatory ceremonies, will be found universally prevalent. The rude idolater of the recently discovered hemisphere, and the polished votary of ancient polytheism, equally concur in the belief, that without the shedding of blood there can be no remission of sins.*

"Nor was the life of the brute creation always deemed sufficient to remove the taint of guilt, and to avert the wrath of heaven. The death of a nobler victim was frequently required; and the altars of Paganism were bedewed with torrents of human blood. The original design of these horrible rites was well known in the secluded groves of Mona; and the mysterious priesthood of Britain unanimously pronounced, that, unless the pollution of our guilty race was washed away in the life-blood of a man, the anger of the immortal gods could never be appeased.

"The universality of sacrificial rites will naturally produce an inquiry into the source, from which a custom, so inexplicable upon any principles of mere natural reason, could have been derived.

"Whence, we may ask, could originate the universal practice of devoting the first-born, either of man or beast, and of offering it up as a burnt-offering? Whence, but from a deep and ancient consciousness of moral depravation? Whence, but from some per-

* It is observed by Acosta, that, in cases of sickness, it was usual for a Peruvian to sacrifice his son to Virachoca, beseeching him to spare his life, and to be satisfied with the blood of his child.—*Acost. apud Purch. Pilgr.* book ix. c. 11.

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verted tradition, respecting *the true sacrifice to be once offered for the sins of all mankind?*"—*See Horæ Mosaicæ*, vol. i. cap. iii. § ii.

BRING FORTH YOUR STRONG REASONS.

F.—Sermon III. p. 31.

FREE WILL.

"Speak to a young Liberal, fresh from Edinburgh or Hackney, or the Hospitals, of Free-will, as implied in Free-agency, he will perhaps confess to you, with a smile, that he is a Necessitarian; proceeds to assure you, that the liberty of the will is an impossible conception, a contradiction in terms, and finish by recommending you to read Jonathan Edwards, or Dr. Crombie; or, as it may happen, he may declare the will itself a mere delusion, a nonentity, and ask you if you have read Mr. Lawrence's Lecture. Converse on the same subject with a plain, single-minded, yet reflecting neighbour, and he may probably say (as St. Augustin said long before him, in reply to the question, What is Time?) I know it well enough when you do not ask me. But alike with both the supposed parties, the self-complacent student, just as certainly as with your less positive neighbour—attend to their actions, their feelings, and even to their words: and you will be in ill luck if ten minutes pass without affording you full and satisfactory proof that the *idea* of man's moral freedom possesses and modifies their whole practical being, in all they say, in all they feel,

in all they do and are done to; even as the spirit of life, which is contained in no vessel, because it permeates all."—*Coleridge.*

If we deny the existence of all we cannot explain, we must deny every thing: and to assert the non-existence of the will, because we cannot thoroughly understand the mode of its operation, appears not more reasonable than to deny the existence of a prospect before us, because it is bounded by an horizon, or to desist from the use of the mariner's compass, because its motion is a mystery.

G.—Sermon III. p. 35.

"Who does not perceive the accomplishment of the sentence upon the woman * in her present circumstance and condition? The female of the human species alone has 'sorrow' during her pregnancy; she alone experiences excruciating pangs in parturition; and she alone is subjected to the authority of her husband, who, from the moment of their union, becomes her lord and master, not unfrequently her stern and unrelenting tyrant. What rational account can philosophy give of the 'pudor circa res venereas?' The several kinds of animals mix openly, without restraint; whereas in the human race not only does nature bid certain parts to be concealed, but their legitimate use is ever in secret, thereby acknowledging, even in the indulgence of a natural instinct, the effect of original sin, when our first parents immediately

* Gen. iii. 16.

after their offence 'knew that they were naked.'—*Holden.*

H.—Sermon IV. p. 43.

HUMAN SORROWS.

"If we could, from one of the battlements of heaven, espy how many men and women at this time lie fainting and dying for want of bread; how many young men are hewn down by the sword of war; how many poor orphans are now weeping over the graves of their father, by whose life they were enabled to eat; if we could but hear how mariners and passengers are at this present in a storm, and shriek out because their keel dashes against a rock, or bulges under them; how many people there are that weep with want, and are mad with oppression, or are desperate by too quick a sense of constant infelicity; in all reason we should be glad to be out of the noise and participation of so many evils. This is a place of sorrows and tears, of so great evils and a constant calamity: let us remove from hence, at least, in affections and preparations of mind."—*Jeremy Taylor.*

I.—Sermon V. p. 61.

KNOWLEDGE.

"In the physical world, to whatever part we turn our eyes, we are presented with a regular succession of *causes* and *effects*. By gradual and almost imperceptible experience, man learns to accommodate his

actions to the fixed laws and ascertainable properties of matter; and by observing the conjunction and succession of phenomena, he acquires the power of foreseeing events in their *causes*."

"Nothing, perhaps, gives its possessor such a decided superiority over the multitude as the power of clearly tracing the consequences of actions, the concatenation of *mental causes and effects, and the adaptation of moral means to ends*."—*Essays on the Formation and Publication of Opinions*, pp. 197, 200.

"A vessel, sent with some scientific men to New South Wales to make lunar observations, was, when within a week's sail of Sydney, wrecked upon a sand-bank in the midst of the ocean. At the dawn of day the crew escaped to that part of the bank which the tide had not yet reached. It was rising, and, wave after wave, the sea approached them. The tide turned. 'Thank God,' said an astronomer, 'we are safe for a month, it is a spring-tide, and will not be so high again for four weeks.'" *

"The *worth* and *value* of knowledge is in proportion to the worth and value of its object.

"What, then, is the best knowledge?"

"THE FEAR OF THE LORD, THAT IS WISDOM: AND TO DEPART FROM EVIL IS UNDERSTANDING."†

* See p. 14 of Lecture delivered at the Mechanics' Institution, upon the Connexion between Knowledge and Happiness. By Basil Montagu. Lecture I. on Vain Fear.

† Job xxviii. 28.

wisdom, by austere and arrogant pretensions to superior righteousness, by solicitude for ritual observances, by dogmatism upon abstruse speculation, by a supercilious contempt of ignorance, or a ferocious intolerance of error? No. But the will of God, such at least as was that which he exemplified, is to be found in lessons of virtue, attractive for their *simplicity*, impressive from their *earnestness*, and authoritative from the miraculous evidence which accompanied them: in habits of humility *without meanness*, and of meekness *without pusillanimity;* in unwearied endeavours to console the afflicted, to soften the prejudiced, and to encourage the sincere; in unshaken firmness to strip the mask from pharisaical and deceitful guides: in kindness to his followers, in forgiveness to his persecutors, in works of the most unfeigned and unbounded charity to man, and in a spirit of the purest and most sublime piety to his Father and his God."—*Dr. Parr.*

M.—Sermon VII. p. 86.

OPINIONS.

We may be persuaded that "authors should be consuls to advise, not dictators to command." But it is also true, that, "an opinion gravely professed by a man of sense and education, demands *respectful* consideration." What were the conclusions of Bacon, Selden, Milton, Sir Matthew Hale, Boyle, Locke, Newton, Milton, Addison, Sir W. Jones?

person will speak villany, and his heart will work iniquity, to practise hypocrisy, and to utter error against the Lord, to make empty the soul of the hungry, and he will cause the drink of the thirsty to fail. The instruments also of the churl are evil: he deviseth wicked devices to destroy the poor with lying words, even when the needy speaketh right. But the liberal deviseth liberal things; and by liberal things shall he stand." *

"Such," says true philosophy, "are the political empirics, mischievous in proportion to their effrontery, and ignorant in proportion to their presumption, the detection and exposure of whose true characters the inspired statesman and patriot represents as indispensable to the re-establishment of the general welfare, while his own portrait of these impostors, whom, in a former chapter (ix. 15, 16,) he calls 'the tail of the nation,' and in the following verse, 'Demagogues that cause the people to err;' affords to the intelligent believer, of all ages and countries, the means of detecting them, and of undeceiving all whose own malignant passions have not rendered them blind, and deaf, and brutish. They are the perennials of history: and though they may disappear for a time, they exist always in the egg, and need only a distempered atmosphere and an accidental ferment to start up into life and activity.

"Worthless persons, of little or no estimation for rank, learning, or integrity, not seldom profligates,

* Isaiah xxxii. 5—8.

P.—Sermon IX. p. 116.

PROGRESS OF CHRISTIANITY.

"If there are any who wish ill to Christianity, let them hasten to prevent the measures of its friends; let them teach their babes to hate the gospel; for those who love it are taking such means to ensure its future triumph as can hardly fail of success, and such as, on all common grounds of calculation, make it likely that even the sons and the daughters of the present race of infidels may be involved in the approaching conquests of the Son of David, and actually join in the loud hosanna that shall announce his accession to the throne of universal empire."—*Natural History of Enthusiasm*, p. 279.

Q.—Sermon X. p. 124.

TO THE INTEMPERATE.

Examine well the subject of the cause of what is termed *insanity*. See in how many instances mental aberration may be traced to bodily derangement. Look at inherited disease. Look at inherited insanity. See the word "excess" in the sacred writings. Compare Deut. xxiv. 16; 2 Kings xiv. 6; Ezek. xviii. Unto how many generations can be traced the consequences of one man's intemperance?

R.—Sermon XI. p. 135.

PASSAGE OF THE RED SEA.

"What is the Roman arch of triumph, or the pillar crowded with sculpture, compared, as a memorial, to the Hebrew song of victory, which, having survived so many ages, is still fresh and vivid as ever; and excites the same emotions of awe and piety in every human breast susceptible of such feelings, which it did in so many ages past in those of the triumphant children of Israel?

"Local traditions have retained the remembrance of the same memorable catastrophe, if not with equal accuracy, with equal fidelity. The superstitious Arabs still call fountains or wells by the names of Moses and Pharaoh. The whole coast is looked on with awe. Wherever, says Niebuhr, you ask an Arab where the Egyptians were drowned, he points to the part of the shore where you are standing. There is one bay, however, where, in the roaring of the waters, they pretend to hear the cries and wailings of the ghosts of Pharaoh's army.

"If these were mere modern notions, they would be of little value; but Diodorus Siculus states as a tradition derived by the Icthyophagi (the people who live on fish,) from their remote forefathers, that once an extraordinary reflux took place, the channel of the gulf became dry, the green bottom appearing, and the whole body of water rolling away in an opposite direction. After the dry land in the deepest part had

" Knowledge forms a correct estimate of evil, and reduces it to its proper dimensions. It makes all the troubles, griefs, and pains incident to life, whether casual adversities or natural afflictions, easy and supportable, by rightly valuing the importance, and moderating the influence of them; it suffers not busy fancy to alter the nature, amplify the degree, or extend the duration of them, by representing them more sad, heavy, and remediless than they truly are; it allows them no force beyond what naturally and necessarily they have, nor contributes nourishment to their increase; it keeps them at a due distance, not permitting them to encroach upon the soul, or to propagate their influence beyond their proper sphere; it sees that all our passions are ministers of good, and that fear is one of our passions for self-preservation;— it therefore stands upon the watch-towers, and spies approaching danger, and gives warning."

" The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge."

" Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding."

——— qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,
Quique metus omnes et inexorabile fatum
Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari.

K.—Sermon VI. p. 63.

POLITICAL IMPOSTORS.

" The vile person shall be no more called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful. For the vile

person will speak villany, and his heart will work iniquity, to practise hypocrisy, and to utter error against the Lord, to make empty the soul of the hungry, and he will cause the drink of the thirsty to fail. The instruments also of the churl are evil: he deviseth wicked devices to destroy the poor with lying words, even when the needy speaketh right. But the liberal deviseth liberal things; and by liberal things shall he stand." *

"Such," says true philosophy, "are the political empirics, mischievous in proportion to their effrontery, and ignorant in proportion to their presumption, the detection and exposure of whose true characters the inspired statesman and patriot represents as indispensable to the re-establishment of the general welfare, while his own portrait of these impostors, whom, in a former chapter (ix. 15, 16,) he calls 'the tail of the nation,' and in the following verse, 'Demagogues that cause the people to err;' affords to the intelligent believer, of all ages and countries, the means of detecting them, and of undeceiving all whose own malignant passions have not rendered them blind, and deaf, and brutish. They are the perennials of history: and though they may disappear for a time, they exist always in the egg, and need only a distempered atmosphere and an accidental ferment to start up into life and activity.

"Worthless persons, of little or no estimation for rank, learning, or integrity, not seldom profligates,

* Isaiah xxxii. 5—8.

with whom debauchery has outwrestled rapacity, easy because unprincipled, and generous because dishonest, are suddenly cried up as men of enlarged views and liberal sentiments, our only genuine patriots and philanthropists: and churls, that is, men of sullen tempers and surly demeanour; men tyrannical in their families, oppressive and troublesome to their dependants and neighbours, and hard in their private dealing between man and man; men who clench with one hand what they have grasped with the other; these are extolled as public benefactors, the friends, the guardians, and advocates of the poor! Here and there, indeed, we may notice an individual of birth and fortune

('For great estates enlarge not narrow minds')

who has been duped into the ranks of incendiaries and mob-sycophants by an insane restlessness, and the wretched ambition of figuring as the Triton of the minnows. Or we may find, perhaps, a professional man, of showy accomplishments, but of a vulgar taste, and shallow acquirements, who, in part from vanity, and in part as a means of introduction to practice, will seek notoriety by an eloquence well calculated to set the multitude agape, and excite *gratis* to overt-acts of sedition or treason, which he may afterwards be fee'd to defend! These, however, are but exceptions to the general rule. Such as the Prophet has described, such is the *sort* of men; and in point of historic fact it has been from men of this sort, 'that profaneness is gone forth into the land.'*

* Jer. xxiii. 15.

" ' He that hateth his brother is a murderer!' says St. John: and of many and various sorts are the brother-haters, in whom this truth may be exemplified. Most appropriately for our purpose, Isaiah has selected the fratricide of sedition, and with the eagle eye and practised touch of an intuitive demonstrator, he unfolds the composition of the character, part by part, in the secret history of the agent's wishes, designs, and attempts, of his ways, his means, and his ends. The agent himself, the incendiary, and his kindling combustibles, had been already sketched by Solomon, with the rapid yet faithful outline of a master in the art: ' The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness, and the end of his talk mischievous madness.'* If, in the spirit of prophecy, the wise ruler had been present to our own times, and their procedures; if, while he sojourned *in the valley of vision*, he had actually heard the very harangues of our reigning demagogues to the convened populace; could he have more faithfully characterized either the speakers or the speeches? Whether in spoken or in printed addresses, whether in periodical journals or in yet cheaper implements of irritation, the ends are the same, the process is the same, and the same is their general line of conduct. On all occasions, but most of all, and with a more bustling malignity, whenever any public distress inclines the lower classes to turbulence, and renders them more apt to be alienated from the government of their country—in all places, and at every opportunity, pleading *to* the poor and ignorant, no where, and at no time, are they found actually pleading *for* them. Nor is this the worst. They even

* Eccles. x. 13.

plead against them. Yes! sycophants to the *crowd*, enemies of the *individuals*, and well-wishers only to the continuance of their miseries, they plead *against* the poor and afflicted, under the weak and wicked pretence, that we are to do nothing of what we can, because we cannot do all that we would wish. Or if this sophistry of sloth (*sophisma pigri*) should fail to check the bounty of the rich, there is still the sophistry of slander in reserve to chill the gratitude of the poor. If they cannot dissuade *the Liberal from devising liberal things*, they will at least blacken the motives of his beneficence. If they cannot close the hand of the giver, they will at least embitter the gift in the mouth of the receivers. Is it not as if they had said within their hearts, The sacrifice of charity has been offered indeed in despite of us; 'but with bitter herbs shall it be eaten!'* Imagined wrongs shall make it distasteful. We will infuse vindictive and discontented fancies into minds already irritable and suspicious from distress, till the fever of the heart shall coat the tongue with gall, and spread wormwood on the palate?

"'If, then, to promise medicine and to administer poison; if to flatter in order to deprave; if to affect love to all and show pity to none; if to exaggerate and misderive the distress of the labouring classes in order to make them turbulent, and to discourage every plan for their relief in order to keep them so; if to skulk from private infamy in the mask of public spirit, and make the flaming patriot privilege the gamester, swindler, or adulterer; if to seek amnesty for a continued violation of the laws of God by an

* Exod. xii. 8.

equal pertinacity in outraging the laws of the land; if these characterize the hypocrite, we need not look far back or far round for faces, wherein to recognize the third striking feature of this prophetic portrait!— 'There is no new thing under the sun.' We have heard it with our own ears, and it was declared to our fathers, and in the old time before them, that one of the main characteristics of demagogues in all ages is, TO PRACTISE HYPOCRISY.

"The instruments also of the churl are evil: 'he deviseth wicked devices with lying words.' He employs a compound poison, of which the following are the main ingredients, the proportions varying as the case requires, or the wit of the poisoner suggests. It will be enough rapidly to name and number the components, as in a catalogue. 1. Bold, warm, and earnest assertions, it matters not whether supported by facts or no, nay, though they should involve absurdities, and demonstrable impossibilities. 2. Startling particular facts, which, dissevered from their context, enable a man to *convey* falsehood while he *says* truth. 3. Arguments built on passing events, and deriving an undue importance from the feelings of the moment. 4. The display of defects without the accompanying advantages, or *vice versâ*. 5. Concealment of the general and ultimate result behind the scenery of local and particular consequences. 6. Statement of positions that are true only under particular conditions, to men whose ignorance or fury make them forget that these conditions are not present, or lead them to take for granted that they are. 7. Chains of questions,

especially of such questions as the persons best authorized to propose are ever the slowest in proposing; and objections intelligible of themselves, the answers to which require the comprehension of a system. 8. Vague and common-place satire, stale as the wine in which flies were drowned last summer, seasoned by the sly tale and important anecdote of but yesterday, that came within the speaker's own knowledge! 9. Transitions from the audacious charge, not seldom of as signal impudence 'as any thing was ever carted for,' to the lie pregnant and interpretative: the former to prove the orator's courage, and that he is neither to be bought or frightened; the latter to flatter the sagacity of the audience. 10. Jerks of style from expressions in ostentation of superior rank and acquirements to buffoonery in pledge of heartiness and good fellowship. 11. Lastly, and throughout all, to leave a general impression of something striking, *something that is to come of it.* This is the pharmacopœia of political empirics, here and every where, now and at all times! These are the drugs administered, and the tricks played off by the mountebanks and zanies of patriotism; drugs that will continue to poison as long as irreligion secures a predisposition to their influence; and artifices, that like stratagems in war, are nevertheless successful for having succeeded a hundred times before. 'They bend their tongues as a bow: they shoot out deceits as arrows: they are prophets of the deceit of their own hearts: they cause the people to err by their dreams and their lightness: they make the people vain, they feed them with wormwood, they give them the water of gall for drink; and the

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"What is the Roman arch of triumph, or the pillar crowded with sculpture, compared, as a memorial, to the Hebrew song of victory, which, having survived so many ages, is still fresh and vivid as ever; and excites the same emotions of awe and piety in every human breast susceptible of such feelings, which it did in so many ages past in those of the triumphant children of Israel?

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N.—Sermon VIII. p. 88.

CANDOUR.

It has been urged, "that a perfectly candid and unbiassed state of mind, a habit of judging in each case entirely according to the evidence, is *unattainable*. But the same may be said of every other virtue: a perfect regulation of any one of the human passions is probably not more attainable than perfect candour; but we are not, therefore, to give a loose to the passions; we are not to relax our efforts for the attainment of any virtue, on the ground that, after all, we shall fall short of perfection."—*Whately. Essays on the Writings of St. Paul*, p. 21.

"Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath." *

O.—Sermon IX. p. 107.

EXIGENCY OF THE TIMES.

"We *must* learn, by the aid of an invigorated and well-informed industry, fitting the urgency of the times, to combine the public labours of christian charity with *arduous* studies; and especially with the habit of profound meditation upon the higher matters of the Divine testimony."—*Saturday Evening*, p. 130.

* Matt. xiii. 12.

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REASON AND RELIGION.

"THE scheme of Christianity, as taught in the liturgy and homilies of our church, though not discoverable by human reason, is yet in accordance with it; link follows link by necessary consequence; religion passes out of the ken of reason only where the eye of reason has reached its own horizon; and faith is then but its continuation: even as the day softens away into the sweet twilight, and twilight, hushed and breathless, steals into the darkness. It is night, sacred night! The upraised eye views only the starry heaven which manifests itself alone: and the outward beholding is fixed on the sparks twinkling in the awful depth, though suns of other worlds, only to preserve the soul steady and collected in its pure *act* of inward adoration to the great I AM, and to the filial word that reaffirmeth it from eternity, whose choral echo is the universe."

ΘΕΩ ΜΟΝΩ ΔΟΞΑ.

Coleridge.

T.—SERMON XII. p. 156.

THE WORD "RESPECTABLE."

THE primary signification of the word "*respectable*," is "*meriting respect.*" It appears to have received an accidental acceptation in signifying "*that which is respected.*"

"There are few departments of our conduct over which the loose and spurious virtue of assimilation exerts a wider influence than what is called church-going. In the rural districts of Scotland, where there is perhaps as much of real piety as in any part of the world, and where the Sunday is kept with at least the appearance of a peculiar sanctity, many go to church with much the same feeling as that with which they attend a market. It is a relief to the monotonous and solitary life they lead during the week: at the church-door, before and between the sermons, they interchange with each other the news and ideas they have respectively collected since the preceding Sunday. Then there are new clothes to be shown upon themselves, new clothes on others to be criticised; lads have to see lasses, and lasses to show themselves to lads. Indeed, there are so many secular utilities in this hebdomadal gathering of the parish, that, if there were no church and no Sunday the people would for certain contrive some other rallying point, and some other cause of assemblage, in order to keep their enjoyments at the present pitch. While these are the true secret reasons for the church-going of a great part of the people, no such thing is confessed either by the mass or by individuals. They mask their inferior motives under the guise of religion, enjoy the credit of superior piety among surrounding nations, and perhaps, in many cases, really believe themselves taking a pleasure in the consecration of themselves to the Deity, when they are only anxious for a little entertainment to the senses, or fear that by acting in a different manner, they would attract a disagreeable observation, as not being *neigh-*

bour-like. In reality, with the most of these minds the duty of going to church, and the duty of having a coat whole at the elbows, and the fashionable quantity of ribbons on the bonnet, spring from the same principle, and the one is a matter of as deep and earnest feeling as the other. All they want is, that they and their children should be, as Burns says, 'respected like the lave;' and whatever tends to produce this effect, or to avert one that is contrary, whether it be church attendance or personal decoration, they will take pains to accomplish, never once caring about the real nature of the means, or stopping to inquire whether they are acting honestly or hypocritically. Thus we solace ourselves with the reflection, that we have a pious and Sabbath-keeping peasantry, while there is little in it besides a love of holiday dressing and gossip, or a fear of being pointed at as 'regardless folk,' by others who in their hearts are as 'regardless.'

"In the towns and cities of the empire, all classes except the lowest are pretty regular in the performance of external religious duties. It may be safely said, however, that the true and high motive for these duties is as little prevalent in town as in country. The return of Sunday surprises the bulk of the population in the midst of the usual routine of pleasure and business; its difference from other days pleases them in the same manner as any other kind of variety in the tenor of existence; they put on their best clothes and gravest faces, take their wives under one arm and silk umbrellas under the other, and with hearts as hard as stones, march off to church. In their selection of a

place of worship, they are governed by all kinds of considerations but those of true piety; they like one minister because of his voice, another because of the literary elegance of his discourses, another because he tickles and stirs up the mind with unusual ideas. Nearly the whole of the fastidiousness of the people about the qualifications of clergymen, arises from feelings connected solely with this world, and no small part of it from an anxiety to have something as compensatory as possible for the unconfessed tedium of church attendance. Never is there a sermon preached which does not inform the audience of many duties which they leave undone, and of many offences which they are in the daily habit of committing. Yet, on their dismissal, amidst the applauses bestowed on the eloquence of the preacher, how rarely do we hear any one confess his liability to the censures he has been listening to, or avow his anxiety to make his conduct more accordant with the models placed before him! Back they go to the world next morning, with hearts as insensible as ever to the primary dictates of religion—envious, revengeful, tyrannical, greedy, self-sufficient. The well-bound Bible—it must be well bound—lies *perdu* for the week in the Sunday coat pocket, and Christianity with it. And then comes another day of listening to and admitting abstractions, and a whole round of hypocritical observances. And thus from year to year they ripe and ripe, and thus from year to year they rot and rot, till death, preceded by a few serious but useless thoughts, closes the scene. Such is unquestionably the current religious condition of a large part of the population—a mere masque. And

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Is it desirable that the generality of men should be permitted thus to go on through all time, the senseless followers of each other, in good as well as in evil, or that they should be brought, if possible, to such a condition as to enable each to act upon a personal and particular knowledge of what is right and what is wrong? Assuredly there can be no hesitation in saying that the latter case is the more desirable; for, though it may be convenient enough for society in the mean time, that the mass should do right through a mere blind principle of imitation, it is clear that neither is there any merit, so far as the individual is concerned, in good that is done in such a way, nor can there be any certain dependence on his continuance in well-doing, when he has no higher motive. If we allow at all that men have higher objects than the things which they enjoy in common with the animals, so also must we allow that they ought to have higher motives than what inspire and guide the lower orders of creation. Each is responsible for the use he makes of himself on earth, and each, therefore, ought to be so rationalised as to act well for himself. And how is this better state of things to be brought about? Evidently it is necessary, for this effect, that the sense and information which guide the few who at present

act upon principle, should be extended, as far as possible, to the whole mass; we must, in short, educate the people. Make men acquainted from the very dawn of the intellect, with the principles of right and wrong; keep these principles intelligibly before their minds as they advance into life; expand their minds by exercise and information, so that they may be enabled in all cases to act upon a just and clear view of moral fitness; and, beyond question, the number would be greatly increased, who are 'a law unto themselves.' As matters at present stand, we have a little real good, a vast quantity of fictitious good, and a considerable portion of downright evil; and fearful lest the last of the three should gain an advantage, we rest satisfied with the mere shadow in which the second consists, which we deem at least better than nothing. But how worthless is all this appearance of good! How useless in itself, how aimless, how unmeritorious! Can there be either benefit to man, or honour to his Creator, in such a system?—*Chambers' Edinburgh Journal.*

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are very likely to accomplish) with a conviction of truth."—*Whately's Essay on the Love of Truth.*

THE MIRTH OF THE LAND IS GONE.

"COME now, and let us REASON together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as *scarlet*, they shall be as white as *snow;* though they be red like *crimson* they shall be as *wool!* If ye be *willing* and *obedient*, ye shall eat the GOOD of the land: but if ye *refuse* and *rebel*, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

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